

Hafa Adai!

FEMA comes to the aid of the NMI during pandemic. PAGE 5
May distribution of NAP benefits via drive-thru again. PAGE 6

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 85

www.saipantribune.com

THURSDAY APRIL 30, 2020

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

United eyes resuming Guam flights Saturday

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

United Airlines is planning to resume its Guam-Saipan flights this Saturday, May 2, a month after suspending air services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said yesterday that United Airlines informed CPA that they will resume services beginning May 2, at thrice a week: Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

RELATED NEWS

Manglona urges Torres to delay resumption of flights. [PAGE 3](#)

A big question remains, though, since this will be contrary to a standing directive from the CNMI government that discourages travel in and out and between the CNMI islands. [See UNITED on Page 4](#)

Over 200 tested in the CNMI

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Less than three days after the start of mass testing for COVID-19, it was learned that more than 224 individuals have already been tested in the See [OVER on Page 4](#)

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, April 29, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	144	1	145
Recovered	129	1	130
Active	9	1	10
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	12	0	12
Active	0	0	0
Deaths	2	0	2

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

'We're not out of the woods yet'

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Editor's Note: This story is part of the "Game Plan" series that Saipan Tribune is publishing this week. It is intended See [WE'RE on Page 4](#)

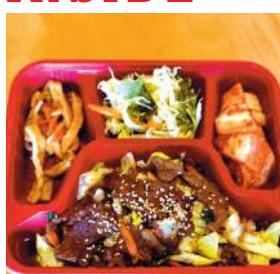
PSS injunction not filed

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

No actual injunction that seeks to force the CNMI government to give the Public School System more mon See [PSS on Page 4](#)



INSIDE



BUSINESS

Find the dishes you see from your favorite K drama series at Sura Saipan in Garapan.

[PAGE 11](#)



WORLD

Pope Francis calls for "prudence and obedience" to protocols to prevent infections.

[PAGE 13](#)



ENVIRONMENT

As the lockdown enters its second month, Mother Nature is reclaiming her territories.

[PAGE 14](#)



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440

FAX: 235-3740

EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

TSL Foundation pays tribute to front-liners

The Tan Siu Lin Foundation joins the community in welcoming the news that there are

no active COVID-19 cases in the CNMI right now, paying tribute to the front-liners that

are leading the battle against the coronavirus.

To show its support, the



Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan show Federal Emergency Management Agency staff the contents of the gift bags the Tan Siu Lin Foundation donated to the CNMI's front-liners.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

foundation, the philanthropic arm of TanHoldings, donated 15,000 face masks and 585 gift bags for front-liners at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres receiving the donation yesterday at the JP Center in Garapan.

TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan was joined by TSL Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino and other TanHoldings executives in the brief turnover ceremony.

"We would like to thank Jerry Tan and the TSL Foundation for their generosity and concern to our front-liners. TanHoldings and the TSL Foundation are part of our strong community, and companies like them step up and continue to give their time and resources to help us combat this crisis," Torres said.

Three Federal Emergency Management Agency staff joined Torres in receiving the donation for nurses, doctors, and other front-liners and

they took note of the generosity of CNMI businesses and residents and the role they are playing in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

"The CNMI is so fortunate to have many businesses and individuals who are generous. With the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force busy moving forward and doing its job and its federal partners helping out, it's great to see businesses also playing an active role in managing this outbreak," said FEMA Office of External Affairs representative Todd Hoose.

As of yesterday, the CNMI has recorded 14 COVID-cases, with 12 individuals having already recovered, two fatalities, and zero active case.

"Thanks to our front-liners for their effort and dedication as they work on reducing and eventually stopping the spread of the virus. We would also like to commend our entire community for cooperating with our government and following safety measures. We

have this low number of cases and now no active one because everyone is doing their part in our fight against this pandemic. Let's remain vigilant," Tolentino said.

The foundation also recognized the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force for its immediate action in reducing the spread of the virus and keeping the community informed while enforcing rules to protect the health and safety of island residents.

The governor called on everyone to continue practicing social distancing and good personal hygiene, and following other safety measures, as the CNMI works on completely flattening the curve.

"We are very blessed to live in a community where everyone is stepping up and making sacrifices for our welfare and safety. That's the reason we're positive that the projection of 6,000 cases by May will not happen. There will be more challenges ahead, but we will get through this—one government, one community, one direction," Torres said.

Justices turn down rehearing 2nd appeal of convicted child molester

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has denied a convicted child molester's petition for rehearing of his second appeal that seeks to reverse his 30-year prison sentence.

The high court justices do not find that Alfredo E. Reyes has sufficiently overcome the demanding standard in granting a rehearing; that is, he has failed to propose how they have "overlooked or misapprehended" a point of law or fact.

Associate Justice John A. Manglona penned the decision and Chief Justice Alejandro C. Castro and Associate Justice Perry B. Inos concurred. The decision was released last Friday.

According to court records, Reyes sexually abused a then-16-year-old girl at Laulau Beach in May 2009, at Coral Ocean Point beach in September 2009, and in the jungle area near Hawaiian Rock Co. in December 2009.

A jury in 2013 found Reyes guilty of three counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree. Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho, who presided over the trial, also found the defendant guilty of three counts of assault and battery.

In 2014, Camacho sen-

tenced him to the maximum 30 years imprisonment. Reyes appealed, asking the Supreme Court to reverse his conviction and sentence.

In 2016, the Supreme Court affirmed the conviction, saying there was ample evidence supporting it. But the high court vacated the sentence and remanded the matter to Camacho for resentencing. In 2017, Camacho resented Reyes to the same maximum 30-year imprisonment, saying that doing so will prevent Reyes from hurting anyone for the next 30 years.

The judge cited Reyes' serious prior convictions that includes accessory to murder.

Reyes appealed again to the Supreme Court, arguing that Camacho failed to individualize his sentence. The high court affirmed the 30-year sentence.

In their decision, the justices said that Camacho may have procedurally erred by impermissibly using an element of a crime as an aggravating factor but they did not find any plain error because Camacho "relied on a number of other aggravating factors."

The justices said this included Reyes' criminal history and his manipulation of the victim.

The justices said they concluded that, while Camacho did commit procedural error, it was not such that it affected Reyes's substantial rights and therefore did not plainly err. The justices said they also found that the sentence to be substantively reasonable.

The justices said Camacho's reliance on other factors, including the various criminal convictions, temporary restraining orders, and the manipulation used to coerce the victim, were all given consideration.

Reyes then petitioned the high court to rehear his case.

In denying Reyes' petition, the justices said a petition for rehearing "must state with particularity each point of law or fact that the petitioner believes the court has overlooked or misapprehended and must argue in support of the petition."

The justices said raising the same issues and argument, and raising new issues not asserted in the original appeal is not permissible unless extraordinary circumstances exist.

Charles P. Reyes Jr. served as court-appointed counsel for Alfredo E. Reyes. Assistant attorney general Robert Charles Lee argued as counsel for the government.

Manglona urges Torres to delay resumption of flights

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the CNMI tamping down COVID-19 cases to zero, mass testing now in place, and with an identified goal to safely reopen the government and the CNMI, Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) urges caution in the face of mounting pressure for the Commonwealth to reopen its borders and thereby resuscitate its economy while keeping the community safe.

In a letter addressed to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Manglona urged Torres and the COVID-19 Task Force to look into testing expansively before loosening restrictions and reopening the CNMI borders.

"Please act diligently and decisively before opening our borders, including on the islands of Rota and Tinian, where the healthcare system is already frail and there are no quarantine facilities available," he said.

Torres has made it clear in

prior interviews that health takes precedence over anything else, including the economy and resumption of international flights.

Recent reports, however, about United Airlines resuming flights between Saipan and Guam starting next week have gotten the community talking and prompted Manglona to raise this issue with Torres.



Manglona

"We are a couple of weeks away from the projected rise in numbers, possibly leading to a worst-case scenario by the end of May to early June," Manglona said, referring to the projected possible peak of 6,000 cases in the CNMI, as earlier predicted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "As such, I would like to emphasize the

importance of keeping our borders closed. If we are not diligent in keeping our low infection rate at bay, then we can expect the projected number of cases to come to fruition in the next couple of weeks."

The senator cited a recent *Time* magazine article about Hokkaido, Japan, being hit hard by a second wave of COVID-19 infections after its governor, following a three-week lockdown, lifted restrictions "too quickly and too

soon because of pressure from local business, coupled with a false sense of security in its declining infection rate."

Manglona reiterated that the only way to know how many asymptomatic carriers there are in the CNMI is to test liberally and expansively.

"As such, I strongly urge [the governor] to request a delay in the commencement of flights until such time that we have a reasonable sample size of at least 10%," he said.

The senator added that, based on the daily testing capacity at the airport site, it will take several weeks before the sample size of 10% of the CNMI's population is attained, which he describes as a reasonable minimum sample size to determine the extent of community transmission.

Guam's mass testing program should also allow the Commonwealth to monitor the neighboring territory's rate of infection, as the CNMI decides on opening up its airports and economy, according to Manglona.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) Accounting Clerk
At least 1 yr. work experience. Proficient in various computer software, such as MS Excel, Word, Peach Tree & other Accounting Softwares.

Submit Applications To:
PAM PACIFIC ENTERPRISES CORP.
DBA Pena House Boutique and Salon
Ground Floor, Sablan Building, Chalan Kanoa
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.# 670-235-7270

Torres: Health and safety over economy

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrera@saipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is not in a hurry to reopen the islands.

"I applaud President [Donald J.] Trump for pushing hard in opening the U.S. economy and I understand how important that is. But in order for me to open the economy of the CNMI in terms of tourism, we need to make sure that our community is safe. This assurance goes for all the islands—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota," he said.

Trump released guidelines to remove COVID-19-related restrictions on people and businesses about two weeks ago in a bid to reopen the Unit-



Torres

ed States and revive its economy. He empowered governors to tailor a system based on the guidelines that the White House released that will best suit their jurisdictions.

Torres knows that opening the CNMI economy next month would be ideal. "However, these things take time. ...Our tourism base come from Japan, Korea, and China and this makes it impossible for us to abruptly open our industry back," he said.

If there is already a vaccine against COVID-19, "then things will be different," he

added. Torres says the CNMI government—together with its partners like Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muña, Dr. John Tudela, Warren Villagomez, and the rest of the COVID-19 Task Force—are doing a great job in keeping the CNMI's COVID-19 infection rate down.

"We have been keeping our priorities straight, providing our doctors and nurses personal protective equipment and supplies and...mass testing," he said.

According to Torres, once



the CNMI is able to secure the safety of the community, it will be easier for the government to market the CNMI as a tourist destination once again.

"Obviously, this pandemic has made us approach tourism in a totally different light. Now, we want to make sure that the tourists that come

here are COVID-19-free and tests—whether at the airport or at the hotel—should be held," he said.

"Aside from the testing, health clearance should also be given by the government. ...Also, once we open our gates to flights, what other criteria do we need to implement? ...These are crucial points that we are in discussions with our health care partners and Marianas Visitors Authority," he added.

Even as the number of reported COVID-19 cases have been reduced to zero, the CNMI is still stocking up on medical equipment and supplies in the event the numbers change.

"The first graph that was presented to me stated a peak of 6,000 cases in mid-May.

See TORRES on Page 4

PRINT + ONLINE + FB PAID PARTNERSHIP

ADVERTISE
with us!

A laptop screen displays the Saipan Tribune website, showing various news articles and advertisements. A smartphone shows the mobile version of the website. A newspaper and a magazine are also visible, with the magazine featuring a large advertisement for "BOE deadlocks on loan for PSS employees' pay".

CALL US 235.8747

NMC releases \$200K to students

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has released approximately \$200,000 in federal funds under the newly enacted CARES Act to its students last week and continues to issue more.

NMC reports that about 300 students have received federal financial aid through direct deposit and mailed checks in the last week.

The college's Finance Office is working on releasing the next batch of funds this week, according to NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico. "We are glad that our students are able to get the financial assistance they need during these unprecedented times. Our Finance team is working hard to make sure

the second batch of grants gets sent out this week," he said.

Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education clarified that the funds should only be distributed to those students who have demonstrated eligibility to file a Free Application for Student Aid or FAFSA form.

FAFSA is a free form from the U.S. Department of Education that

prospective and current college students fill out in order to determine eligibility for federal financial aid, such as Pell grants.

Additionally, only students who were registered in NMC's spring 2020 semester are eligible for the CARES cash grant.

Approximate amounts are \$700 for eligible full-time students and \$350 for eligible part-time students. Full-time students are those who have 12 or more credits. Part-time are those who have 11 credits and below. The college has about 1,200 students.



Eliptico

The funds were specifically allocated to NMC students from the CARES Act to help students weather the impacts of COVID-19.

The CARES Act, which was passed into law last month, requires that half of the funds allocated to NMC, or \$920,000, must be reserved for NMC students whose lives and educations have been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak.

The U.S. Department of Education has allocated approximately \$1.8 million through this grant to NMC using a formula that provides funds to institutions of higher education throughout the country.

OVER

From Page 1

CNMI, with their specimens collected at the drive-thru booth at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. So far, all specimens have been negative for coronavirus.

The community-based testing started on Monday, April 27 with 71 individuals, which included first responders and some medical workers. On Tuesday, April 28, testing was expanded to the CNMI public and a total of 153 individuals were tested. These numbers were obtained from independent sources; the Office of the Press Secretary had yet to release official numbers as of press time.

Overall, a total number of 224 specimens have already been collected. There was no further information on how many more people were tested for COVID-19 yesterday.

The specimens for testing are being collected by Commonwealth Health Center staff at the airport.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is now awaiting the results of 262 specimen, which includes the specimens that were tested by the CHC Lab, Guam Public Health Laboratory, and the Diagnostic Laboratory Services in Honolulu, Hawaii.

As of yesterday, there are no active COVID-19 cases in the CNMI and there is no person under investigation.

Of the 14 that were positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI, two have died; all 12 others have already recovered and been released from the Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort in Susupe.

COVID-19 in Guam

The Department of Public Health

Thursday, April 30, but that was later extended.

Earlier this month, King-Hinds characterized United Airlines' flight suspension as "unfortunate but necessary and critical to the whole-of-government approach" to identify, contain and isolate the further spread of COVID-19 in the community.

King-Hinds said the efforts to have flight suspended actually began last January, during the early stage of the pandemic, but there were a lot of hurdles that they needed to get through to make that happen. As it is,

and Social Services tested 110 individuals for COVID-19 on April 28. One tested positive through DPHSS and 109 tested negative. The results include samples from the COVID-19 expanded testing in Astumbo and Dededo.

The DPHSS overall count also includes probable cases of COVID-19 and confirmed positive cases tested by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, California, the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, the Guam National Guard, and Diagnostic Laboratory Services.

To date, Guam has a total of 145 confirmed cases, five deaths, and 130 recoveries. All remaining cases are in isolation.

According to the Joint Information Center in Guam, when a patient is released from isolation, he or she is no longer considered infectious.

only the Federal Aviation Authority has the power to suspend flights in the CNMI.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres later requested United Airlines to suspend all flights to and from the CNMI effective April 6 to 30, 2020, in the wake of the then-two confirmed COVID-19 cases and one death in the quarantine center on Saipan.

Skymark Airlines Inc.'s last flights between Saipan and Japan was on March 25. The suspension of Saipan-Narita, Narita-Saipan operation was supposed to last until May 10, 2020, but the company extended the flight operation suspension until May 31, 2020.

UNITED

From Page 1

as a health precaution. King-Hinds said yesterday that that standing directive has not changed yet.

There is currently no positive COVID-19 case in the CNMI.

United Airlines' last flight from Saipan to Guam was on April 5, in which 57 passengers were aboard a 170-seat plane. The airlines' original plan was to suspend flights only until today.



King-Hinds

PSS

From Page 1

ey has been filed against the CNMI government yet.

This was learned during a regular board meeting yesterday, when the PSS legal team informed the Board of Education that, so far, what's been filed is just a lawsuit or complaint that the government is not paying what's due PSS, which is 25% of the CNMI's revenue.

"No actual injunction was filed. Simply filing a lawsuit and asking that an injunction be issued doesn't create an injunction," said PSS legal counsel Tiberius Mocanu.

He explained that an injunction is a remedy that you would ask the court for and happens when you ask the court to do something.

"In this case, when we filed the lawsuit and asked for injunctive relief, we asked that the court order Secretary of Finance David Atalig and Gov. Ralph

DLG Torres to cease payments under Public Law 21-08, which was the budget for this fiscal year," he said.

However, to file an injunction, PSS had to present to the court that there would be irreparable harm had the payments continued to occur in violation of what the Supreme Court's opinion said, he added.

"Consequently, before [the injunction] was filed, the Public School System closed its schools on account of COVID-19, so our irreparable harm that we would've sought as the basis of our injunction was gone. We would've argued that the closure of schools and the discontinuance of education on account of not receiving what we were owed would've caused irreparable harm," Mocanu explained.

Mocanu is currently working with his staff to complete and file a motion for summary judgement to move forward with the lawsuit that was filed in the first week of April.

"A motion for summary judgement proves there are no disputes on what the facts are. In our case there are none. We can all agree with the numbers that the Department of Finance has and what the appropriations to PSS and to other agencies are. We're simply arguing that the interpretation of the certified question applies to this fiscal year, thus changes the formula that should be implemented, thus giving PSS more money," Mocanu explained.

Yesterday, board members Marylou Ada, Andrew Orsini, and Phillip Mendiola-Long voted to re-affirm the lawsuit and file the motion for summary judgement. Board chair Janice Tenorio and vice chair Herman Atalig voted against filing the summary judgement.

Tenorio suggested that her colleagues consider revisiting the lawsuit and to defer it to a later time. "Let's go back to the table instead of taking this to court. I really believe in sitting down and working out things. Defer the lawsuit until our government can get on their feet," she said.

Mocanu also said that the CNMI needs to be cautious about not having any new cases, that messages on social distancing and proper hygiene should remain so the community

TORRES

From Page 3

But graphs also change as recently, there were some changes pushing the peak to June and some in July. Regardless of when the peak will come, my sight and priority was based on the first projection in May and we're pushing everything so can meet that deadline," he said.

"If it hits us in May, we are prepared and we will not wait for June

or July. Our efforts are fueled by the thought that we have limited time so we need to maximize that time to get prepared and that is why we are stocking up. ...We are maximizing our partnership with federal agencies and looking at other stimulus resources, funds, and grants," he added.

Once the air clears, Torres vows to revive the economy. "...Continue social distancing, proper hygiene, and protect our children and families. Let us recover soon and try to get back our economy," he said.

WE'RE

From Page 1

to give a look into the CNMI's game plan in terms of reopening the CNMI and restarting its economy.

With no new COVID-19 positive cases in the CNMI for over a week now, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., with the Office of the Governor and the COVID-19 Task Force, will be determining what government services can be made available soon in the Commonwealth.

CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña said that plans will have to be made in terms of limiting the services to make sure that there will be no "second wave" of the coronavirus infections in the CNMI, especially as flights start to resume.

"We'll be working with [Gov. Ralph DLG Torres] and the Task Force to come up with a plan on... what services can be had," Muña said in an interview. "Right now, we have a lot of services that are available. Limited, though. What are the things that we need to do to make sure that there's not a second wave? And [what services] to continue as the airplanes fly back in?"

Muña also said that the CNMI needs to be cautious about not having any new cases, that messages on social distancing and proper hygiene should remain so the community

help in following the directives that has really helped flatten the curve. I cannot do it alone. The lieutenant governor cannot do it alone. Our medical staff cannot do it alone, not even the first responders. But [we can] as a community," he added.

The governor echoed Muña in asking the community to continue to follow the directives on social distancing and proper hygiene.

"We continue to practice social distancing, to practice proper hygiene and wearing masks. It's uncomfortable but when you go home and your family is safe, this inconvenience, this uncomforable, means nothing when you come home safe to your family," he added.

"We're not out of the woods yet, but if we continue to do this as one community, I'm certain that we will flatten the curve for all of us," Torres added.

"Flattening the curve" means the idea of slowing a virus' spread, hence measures such as social distancing and self-isolation.



Muña



Muña

FEMA comes to the aid of the NMI during pandemic



BRAD RUSZALA

Todd Hoose, Federal Emergency Management Agency Incident Management Assistance Team external affairs officer, right, is shown with Col. Elizabeth Tugas, 1984th U.S. Army Medical Hospital senior nurse. Tugas and her six-person team are on Saipan in support of the CNMI's COVID-19 response.

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI is stocking up on personal protective equipment and supplies, as well as additional ventilators, in a move to ensure that there will be enough in the CNMI should there be a surge of COVID-19 cases, or a second wave, in the CNMI.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said the orders for equipment and supplies were done as early as a month ago, and more shipments are coming in during the week, up until next week. This proactive move was done after seeing the challenges the United States and other countries are facing in terms of not having enough PPEs for first responders and medical professionals.

"I'm confident that our PPEs will be enough for our nurses, our first responders, [and] doctors, but we want more," he said.

Torres wants to secure enough PPEs for the CNMI, especially with all other countries stopping the export of PPEs "because they know how

critical [it is] to protect their people and their country."

"What we did is we looked on our side of the world and made sure that we're ahead of the game by ordering our ventilators. We had issues on ventilators alone, [and] understanding how many ventilators are needed in the U.S., even one or two more here in CMMI will help tremendously," Torres said. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth Health Center only had 17 ventilators. The current number is still unknown as machines will be arriving in the next few days.

The governor said the CNMI still has more ventilators that "we're having a hard time bringing in, but it is being worked out, in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"We purchased PPEs, ventilator supplies, and we also chartered cargo flights through our partners...[who are] working hard and bringing those PPEs, equipment, lab supplies, test kits. We have more coming," he assured.

According to Torres, while the government paid for the purchases, they are working with FEMA on reimbursements, that they also have already turned in the first project worksheets on the reimbursements.

FEMA external affairs officer Todd Hoose confirmed the arrangement on reimbursements, and added that the cost-sharing ratio is at 75-25%, which means 75% of the cost will be shouldered by FEMA and 25% will be shouldered by the CNMI government. However, Hoose said that that ratio can still change, since the 75-25% split is just the standard ratio.

"Currently, the cost share is 75-25, but that's going to be up for discussion with the President and with the head of FEMA, because cost share...[is] negotiated based on how impacted a community is, how well they prepared, and what economic means they have," he said in a separate interview.

Hoose added that FEMA is making sure that all purchases are valid and eligible.

Man gets 1-day prison term for resisting arrest

A 35-year-old man has pleaded guilty to pushing a police officer who was trying to arrest him and was slapped with a one-day prison term.

At a hearing at the Supreme Court courtroom on Monday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho sentenced Alexander Jones Castro Jr. to the maximum of six months imprisonment, all suspended except for one day. Castro was given credit for one day of time served. He was placed under supervised probation for one year.

Castro was ordered to pay a \$100 fine, \$25 court cost, and \$120 probation fee. He was re-



quired to perform 80 hours of community service and complete alcohol abuse counseling and any other recommended counseling by the Community Guidance Center.

According to the **Camacho** factual basis of the

plea agreement, Castro pushed a police officer who was arresting him on Aug. 31, 2019, on Saipan. The court document did not indicate why the officer was trying to arrest Castro.

On Nov. 15, 2019, the Office of the Attorney General filed an information against Castro, containing one count

of assault and battery, which is punishable with a maximum sentence of one year imprisonment.

Four days later, the OAG filed the first amended information containing one count of resisting arrest, which carries a maximum penalty of one-year in prison.

Camacho noted that Castro has no prior conviction.

Assistant public defender Karie Comstock served as counsel for Castro. Assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas appeared for the government. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

"We want to make sure that PPEs are purchased, it's valid, certified PPE. Then FEMA reimburses. Everything that's going on, everything that's being purchased, everything that's landing, we're there, just so we can look at it and say that's eligible expense," he added.

According to Hoose, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. comes up with a list of necessities, which the Office of the Governor directly pro-

cures. "As you know, if it's purchased directly, it's so much cheaper. It's the same quality and so much cheaper than going through the whole federal process. So, whatever they can get directly, they bring it in, show us the bill, and it's reimbursed at a cost share."

FEMA also assists the CNMI in getting supplies that the Office of the Governor cannot get directly, through their aircraft.

FEMA flies their aircraft

back and forth all over the world to bring in and drop PPEs and supplies to individual states. For the CNMI, the supplies were distributed by FEMA on island, from their aircraft that flew in from Hawaii.

Hoose further said that the supplies actually go from FEMA, straight through the Office of the Governor and right to CHCC, adding that "all these personal protective equipment, it's all controlled by CHCC..."

F H B . C O M

Call the shots anytime with Mobile Banking.

DOWNLOAD THE FHB MOBILE APP

Monitor and manage your accounts on your schedule, just like Marcus Mariota.*

- + Deposit checks
- + Transfer funds
- + Monitor transactions
- + Pay bills and other people

Learn more at fhb.com/mobile.

 **First Hawaiian Bank.**
IT ALL STARTS WITH YES

[Download on the App Store](#)

[Available on Google play](#)



Gualo Rai Branch, Gualo Rai Commercial Center, Middle Road • Tel: (670) 235-3090
Oleai Branch, Oleai Center, Beach Road Chalan Lauau • Tel: (670) 234-6559

Member FDIC

* Enrollment in FHB Online and Mobile Banking is free for personal banking and Business Priority Banking customers, and may incur additional fees for all other business checking customers. You must have a mobile device with internet to use FHB Mobile Banking, and a rear-facing camera with auto-focus to use Mobile Deposit. See the Terms and Conditions of FHB Online Services at fhb.com/digital for fees, eligibility requirements and restrictions. App Store® is a service mark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Android, Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google LLC.

May distribution of NAP benefits via drive-thru again

The CNMI Nutrition Assistance Program will be distributing benefits through drive-thru service again at their office location in As Lito from 8am to 3pm, from May 1 to 15, 2020.

This means eligible households will be issued their benefits to them while in their ve-

hicle. There will be no walk-in service during the drive-thru period.

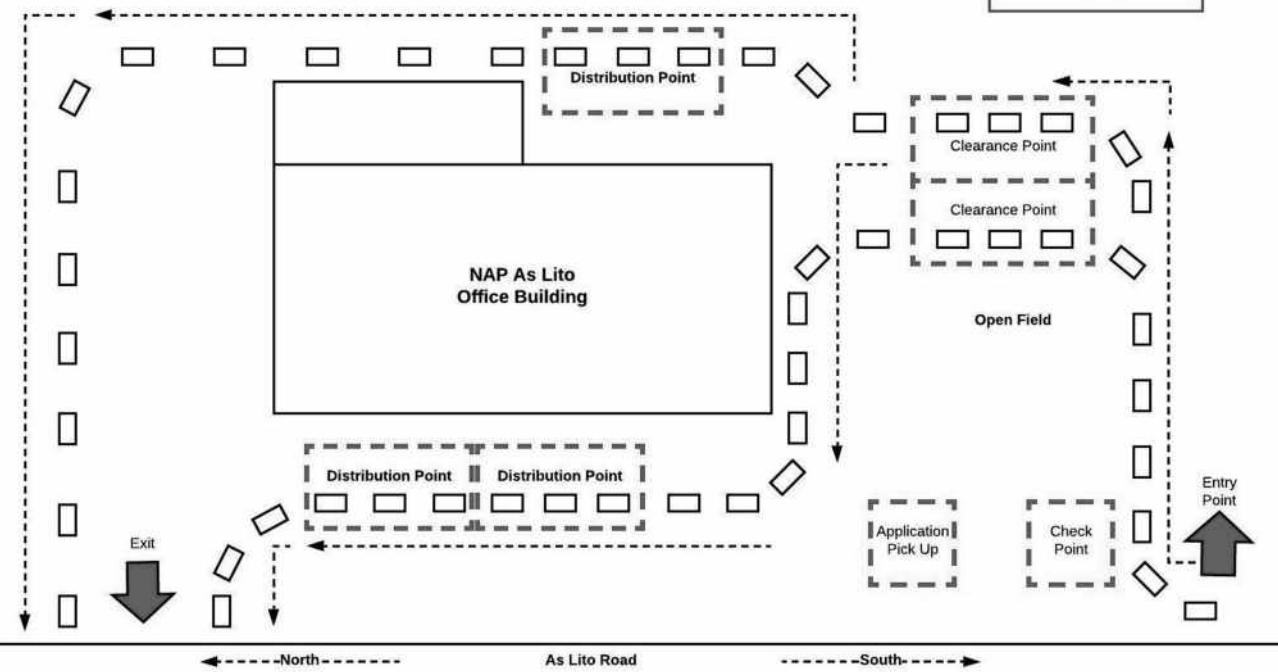
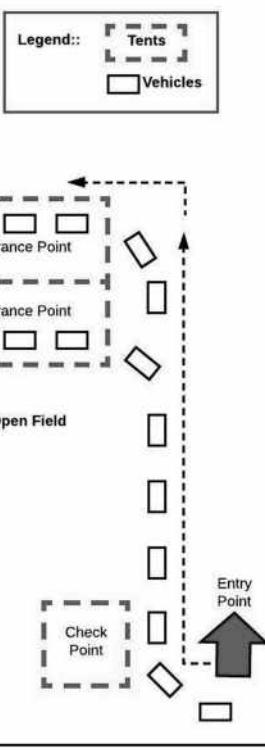
This is intended to ensure the safety and protection of the public and NAP personnel from COVID-19, in compliance with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' extended Public Health Emergency declaration

and for ensuring the protocols for social distancing are in place.

Walk-in service for benefit pick-up will only be available from May 18 to 29, 2020. Additionally, only those whose names appear on the valid NAP Identification Card may receive their house-

hold's benefits. In addition to the NAP Identification Card, the individual must have a valid photo identification card such as a valid driver's license or passport.

The Nutrition Assistance Program has developed a schematic of how the benefit distribution will take place.



SEABEES ON TINIAN

Equipment Operator 2nd Class Mitchell McCune, deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5's Detail Tinian, performs a quarterly check on a water truck to ensure all parts are well lubricated. NMCB-5 is deployed across the Indo-Pacific region conducting high-quality construction to support U.S. and partner nations to strengthen partnerships, deter aggression, and enable expeditionary logistics and naval power projection.

ENGINEERING AIDE 2ND CLASS YOHANES NUGUSE



Utilitiesman 1st Class Isaías Betancourt Gomez, deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5's Detail Tinian, identifies locations of water mains and power sources for a project site on the island.

ENGINEERING AIDE 2ND CLASS YOHANES NUGUSE



Equipment Operator 2nd Class Mitchell McCune, deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5's Detail Tinian, removes dirt and clears the way for a new camp of Southwest Asian huts the U.S. Navy Seabees are building on Tinian.

ENGINEERING AIDE 2ND CLASS YOHANES NUGUSE



Construction Mechanic 1st Class Joshua Hobelman, deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5's Detail Tinian, reads plans for the upcoming jungle gym project for a kids' park on the island.

ENGINEERING AIDE 2ND CLASS YOHANES NUGUSE



Equipment Operator 2nd Class Scott Valente, deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5's Detail Tinian, levels the ground using a 120M CAT Grader for Southwest Asian huts the U.S. Navy Seabees are building on Tinian.

ENGINEERING AIDE 2ND CLASS YOHANES NUGUSE

ISSUANCE SCHEDULE

BENEFIT ISSUANCE SCHEDULE FOR SAIPAN

May 1, 2020	Friday	Case Records Ending with "1"
May 4, 2020	Monday	Case Records Ending with "2"
May 5, 2020	Tuesday	Case Records Ending with "3"
May 6, 2020	Wednesday	Case Records Ending with "4"
May 7, 2020	Thursday	Case Records Ending with "5"
May 8, 2020	Friday	Case Records Ending with "6"
May 11, 2020	Monday	Case Records Ending with "7"
May 12, 2020	Tuesday	Case Records Ending with "8"
May 13, 2020	Wednesday	Case Records Ending with "9"
May 14, 2020	Thursday	Case Records Ending with "0"
May 15, 2020	Friday	Open Day

Issuances for Open Day will also be conducted through drive-thru. Open Day is intended for households who missed or were unable to pick up their benefits according to the Issuance Schedule. The NAP will strictly enforce the issuance schedule, so there will be no early issuances.

Carpooling or car-sharing is

allowed; however, households must follow their schedule in order to receive their benefits.

Walk-in service, for benefit pick up only will be available from May 18 to 29, 2020.

Households who would like to inquire about the status of their applications may contact the NAP office at 237-2801 or 2802. (PR)

Domenech, Stewart named as Compact's US negotiators

The Department of the Interior applauds the selection of Douglas W. Domenech and Karen B. Stewart to serve as the federal negotiators with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to amend their respective Compacts of Free Association and to lead Compact review discussions with the Republic of Palau.

Domenech is the current assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs at the Department of the Interior, while Stewart is the former U.S. ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

"I am honored to represent the President of the United States as a co-negotiator alongside Ambassador Stewart in the important government-to-government discussions on the Compacts of Free Association with the FSM, the RMI, and Palau," said Domenech. "These mutually strategic and beneficial Compact partnerships are also manifested in the people-to-people relationships that Americans share with people in the freely associated states, both here in the U.S. and in the Pacific. The Secretary and I recognize the important responsibility that Interior holds as the administrator of Compact funding, and we look forward to the discussions that we will have with each country as we work together to renew the expiring financial provisions of the Compacts."

"The United States' relationships with the RMI, FSM, and Palau contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. I am proud to represent

the President and the American people, along with Assistant Secretary Domenech, during these important negotiations," said Stewart.

The three Pacific Island countries, referred to collectively as the freely associated states, share a unique bilateral relationship with the United States that dates to World War II. On May 21, 2019, in a historic visit at the White House, President Donald J. Trump met with FSM president David W. Panuelo, former RMI president Hilda Heine, and Palau president Tommy R. Remengesau, III. They released a joint statement recognizing the unique, historic, and special relationships shared, and reaffirmed each countries' respective commitments to the Compacts of Free Association. This was the first time that any FAS president—or all three FAS presidents—had met with a sitting President at the White House. During that visit in May, several members of the Trump administration, led by the secretaries of State, Defense, Interior, and Veterans Affairs, also welcomed the FAS presidents in a series of meetings at different federal agencies in Washington, D.C.

Under current law, the financial provisions of the Compact of Free Association agreement (Public Law 108-188) with the FSM and the RMI expire at the end of fiscal year 2023. Financial provisions available to Palau under its Compact of Free Association (Public Law 99-658, Palau Compact Review Agreement) expire at the end of fiscal year 2024. (PR)



STILL CLOSED FOR BUSINESS

More than a month after the CNMI went into a semi-lockdown, many businesses remain closed but some are cautiously reopening but with strict distancing rules and mostly for to-go services only.

KRIZEL TUAZON

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 85
 Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
 Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
 Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
 editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
 mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The psychological toll of the coronavirus is a pandemic of its own

In the midst of a pandemic, sometimes a single death can bring home the vast scope of the crisis. Dr. Lorna M. Breen, an emergency room physician at New York-Presbyterian Allen Hospital, treated countless COVID-19 patients until she contracted the disease herself. After seeming to recover, she returned to work but soon was sent home again, eventually joining family members in Charlottesville, Va., where on Sunday Breen, who had no history of mental illness, killed herself. "Make sure she's praised as a hero, because she was," her father told reporters. "She's a casualty just as much as anyone else who has died."

We know how to count the people infected or killed by the virus. We can tally jobs lost, economic activity stalled, even the number of students suddenly being taught at home instead of in their classrooms. We have all learned the value of 6 feet of separation, an unintended invocation of "6 feet under," deemed by London officials the proper depth for burying a corpse during a 1665 plague outbreak. But how do we tally up something as amorphous as fear or depression, or loneliness or despair? Where do we assign the death of Dr. Breen, whose encounters with the sickness and death of others appear to have sent her reeling into such a dark and irrecoverable place?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported recently that more than 9,200 health care workers had tested positive for the virus and 27 had died. But it also said it had no doubt that the true tallies were much higher, given the scarcity of testing. In Detroit, police officers have fallen ill by the hundreds. The EMS1.com website counts nearly two dozen EMTs and paramedics who have died of the disease nationwide. The list didn't include John Mondello, 23, a rookie EMT in the Bronx who killed himself Friday after telling a friend he felt "a lot of anxiety witnessing a lot of death" and that "he'd feel it was a heavy experience when he'd fail to save a life." He, like Breen, is a victim of this crisis if not of the virus itself.

The stress is everywhere, including among the children of health care workers who worry about their parents' safety, just as the parents worry about bringing the virus home to their kids. Nearly half of adult Americans reported that their "mental health had been negatively impacted" by the crisis, according to a poll by Kaiser Family Foundation. That feeling was more prevalent among those obeying stay-at-home orders, which experts warn can exacerbate preexisting mental health and substance abuse issues. So what came first, the anxiety or the isolation? Does it really matter? There are rational fears at play here.

Those who dismiss the coronavirus as just another flu embrace dangerous ignorance. Researchers and front-line medical professional are still trying to understand the scope of the virus' impact on the human body. There are reports of severe clotting among some patients, including some in their 40s who died of strokes. Doctors worry that some victims may survive the infection but suffer significant long-term damage to vital organs—the heart, the liver, the kidneys. And it's unclear whether surviving a bout of COVID-19 inoculates

See **GAME PANDEMIC** on next page



Feeling sad? Lethargic? Fearful? Happiness is just a bike ride away

At the beginning of the shutdown, I was overcome by a palpable sense of lethargy.

All I wanted to do was sleep in and eat toast. I stopped running with my partner, because our usual route—the beach bike path in Venice and Santa Monica—is closed, barricaded by mounds of sand.

Even the charming walkways along the Venice canals are blocked; they are too narrow to maintain a safe distance should someone approach from the opposite direction.

For me, and I imagine for everyone else, the first month of the lockdown was a time of major mood swings and a bizarre feeling of dislocation.

From the safety of our living rooms, we saw hellish scenarios in nursing homes and hospitals, where patients with COVID-19 struggled for their lives, where front-line health professionals raged and despaired about the lack of protective equipment.

As I watched from my couch, I was horrified, outraged ... and sleepy.

And then, sometime around Week 4, I woke up. I got the bikes out of the garage. On two wheels, after all, it's easy to practice social distancing. My 10-year-old niece and I strapped on our helmets and plunged into the world. We could not waste this glorious spring weather one more second.

Since we couldn't ride at the beach, we explored Marina del Rey, the pleasure craft harbor that was conjured into existence out of wetlands in the 1950s and '60s, a testament to the enduring need of humans to bend nature to their will.

We wove in and out of streets, alleys and dockside promenades. We fantasized about living in the fancy apartment buildings until we came home and looked up the rents. (Two bedrooms, two bathrooms for \$6,100? Yeah, no.)

Sometimes we just rode in circles in the huge empty parking lot at the public boat ramps near the new Trader Joe's. At the west end of Burton Chase Park, we discovered a colony of sea lions that has taken over some of the guest docks. We often stand behind the fence, a few yards from the sleek creatures, and just watch.

Seeing these smelly guys frolic and bark like puppies, roll around in their sleep and salute the sun propped up on their flippers with their eyes closed and noses pointed up has been more satisfying than any of the nature documentaries we've seen lately. (And we have seen a lot.)

One day last week, we watched as members of the nonprofit group Marine Animal Rescue tried to catch an injured sea lion that had fishing line wrapped around its neck. They'd been try-

By ROBIN ABCARIAN

Los Angeles Times

Robin Abcarian is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.



ing to remove it for months. Holding big nets, they slowly approached the animal in their yellow dinghy, but the sea lion once again spooked and slipped into the water out of reach.

A little farther south, we came upon the Ballona Creek bike path, which parallels the north side of Ballona Creek, a cemented channel surrounded by 600 acres of Los Angeles' only remaining coastal wetlands. If you come north from LAX on Lincoln Boulevard, you will get an excellent view as you drive down the hill past Loyola Marymount University.

This glorious open space has been the subject of decades of strife—first, between conservationists and developers who wanted to build high-rise hotels and shopping centers, and now between two sets of environmentalists who have divergent views on how the wetlands should be managed.

Should the state embark on a decadelong, \$250 million project to approximate what the wetlands might have looked like before humans desecrated them and nonnative species such as iceplant and mustard moved in?

Or should we make the best of what we have now? Burrowing owls seem to have accommodated themselves to the nonnative iceplant, after all, and one school of scientific thought holds that invasive species are not inherently destructive. Some, these scientists believe, can even be beneficial.

The battle over the future of Ballona Wetlands is going to rage, as it always has, for years.

None of this should prevent us from enjoying to the fullest what is there now.

At this weird moment in history, with an invisible virus making life hell for so many, I daresay that getting outside and communing with nature, where it can be done safely in a socially distanced way, is one of the best ways to regain a sense of well-being and optimism.

I defy you to wander around wetlands, or get up close to a colony of frisky sea lions, and not be thrilled to be alive.

America's territories are not forgotten

On April 15, 2020, *The Hill* published an opinion piece titled "The Incomplete Coronavirus Map – U.S. Territories Left Behind," in which the author linked the federal government's coronavirus response and maps used by media outlets to a broader point of criticism on America's treatment of the U.S. territories.

President Trump and the White House Coronavirus Task Force, led by Vice President Pence, have in no way forgotten the Americans residing in the U.S. territories. The President has declared COVID-19 emergency declarations for all the U.S. territories, and the territorial governors have participated in weekly calls with the president and/or vice president, wherein they have discussed the status of the government's response to combat COVID-19 in their respective territories.

The U.S. Congress has not forgotten about the Americans residing in the U.S. territories either, having passed historic pieces of legislation in response to COVID-19, each including support for families and small businesses in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Additional funding and support have also been provided to the citizens of the Freely Associated States, three Pacific Island countries in a special relationship with the United States under Compacts of Free Association: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Is-

lands and the Republic of Palau.

In response to this unprecedented pandemic, President Trump immediately activated 42 federal departments and agencies and signed four separate stimulus bills: the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the \$2 trillion CARES Act, and most recently the Paycheck Protection and Healthcare Enhancement Act, all of which included funding to support insular area governments, individuals, families, small businesses, employees, schools, hospitals, health care providers, and public health activities.

Each federal agency has programs that benefit the territories. For example, the Treasury's Coronavirus Relief Fund provides \$3 billion specifically for the territories and the District of Columbia. The Department of Education has \$153 million set aside for territories in the Education Stabilization program. Another \$55 million was made available through the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs for COVID-19 response. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing over \$8 million for PPE, testing kits and equipment. The Federal Aviation Administration announced approximately \$86 million to support airports in the smaller U.S. territories.

Individuals and families in the U.S. territories are receiving direct assistance through cash payments from the Internal Rev-

By DOUGLAS W. DOMENECH

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Douglas W. Domenech is the Department of the Interior assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs.

enue Service. Individuals and families in the territories are also receiving coronavirus pandemic unemployment assistance and federal pandemic unemployment compensation from the U.S. Department of Labor. In fact, Labor has extended these same pandemic unemployment benefits to the FAS.

The President has implemented a clear and decisive "whole-of-America" strategy to combat this virus and specifically support our insular areas. The administration continues to fight every day for the American people, and the funds and support provided have been critical to families in the U.S. territories as well as the FAS.

In the weeks and months ahead, the administration will continue to support and work with the territories to reopen their economies, get people back to work and continue to protect American lives. Together, we will overcome this crisis and emerge stronger than ever before.

While people protested the coronavirus lockdown, I was struggling to breathe

As the streets of Hartford, Conn., filled with people, I lay in a hospital bed, forcing myself to breathe. In, out. I told myself. In, out.

I tried to keep time with a monitor beeping at my side, and every so often, I called for a nurse's help. Two hours had gone by without anyone checking on me, but the hallways were crammed with patients. People lay, masked and still, in the middle of the COVID-19 section of the emergency room at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan. No one could hear me. Though I had been sick with COVID-19 for nearly a month, the virus had recently taken a turn, attacking my lungs and my body in an entirely new way.

In, out. I thought. In, out.

Still, I was better off than thousands who had come before me and the thousands who will come after. The virus was making its way through my system, but I was OK, and I was going home. But the mask on my face made it hard to breathe, and I felt constricted with a pulse oximeter on my finger, a needle in my hand and a blood pressure band on my arm.

In, out. I said. In, out.

At the same time, in Connecticut—my home state—hundreds of people gathered in the capital city. American flags were billowing. Signs were flailing. Red hats were everywhere. I had no idea this was happening, but by the time I got home from the hospital, the photos were all over the internet.

"Your health is not more important than my liberties," someone had scribbled on a car window. The pain in my chest—which had persisted and grown throughout the last eight days—was now compounded by something else.

I couldn't believe the state of my country. I couldn't believe what my fellow Americans were doing to one another and not only how easily but how savagely they wanted to tear each other down.

I know that this virus is terrifying in more ways than one, and I know that the outbreak has caused unparalleled economic loss.

An unfathomable number of people have been left without a job, an income or an ability to pay rent. Each of those individuals is experiencing a devastating loss in their own way.

Still, the only thing more important than our livelihoods is our lives—and each and every one of us needs to do our part to ease the country into a new normal.

When I saw those photographs, I knew that those protesters, like countless others across the United States, were talking to me. They were talking to the nearly 1 million other Americans



Sophia Brown, left, and her husband Bill Brown are joined by a woman who did not give her name as they participate in a rally in front of the governor's mansion during the coronavirus pandemic, Monday, April 20, 2020 in Hartford, Conn. AP

life. Your relentless pursuit of the perfect wave. And upon your descent, you will gain speed. Let the calm wash over you, embracing you, reminding you, go on brother. Captain Caveman, a brother to his friends, to his students Mr. Gramlich or Mr. G. I hear him getting ready to ride! Ease into it, right there, stand smiling riding away. You choose your wave in life. Ride on brah.

You once told me to ride the wave with no hesitation, no

is wrong with you people?" With anxiety comes frustration and impatience. You see it too among those who protest stay-at-home orders, demonstrations rooted in politics but framed by anxiety over the economic and psychic fallout from a society in stasis.

And then there's the grief, amplified by distance as the sick die far from the touch of loved ones. Making matters worse, funerals, a rite of cultural catharsis, are being delayed or held online or, in some cases, conducted with the casket or the mourners on the move. We are by and large a social species, and to be walled off from one another by an invisible curse takes a psychological

By ELISSA MIOLENE

The Hartford Courant



Elissa Miolene grew up in Stamford, Conn., and lives in Manhattan. She is 27.

who have contracted COVID-19 over the past few months.

Were they also talking about the nearly 50,000 people whose lives were stolen by this virus in America alone so far? The sisters, mothers, grandmothers; the brothers, fathers, grandfathers; all dead because of COVID-19?

Yes. They were. And they are.

Is that because to the protesters, the health—and lives—of those hundreds of thousands of Americans is less important than their "liberties"?

Maybe the virus hasn't infected you or someone you love just yet. But it will. By gathering in groups, the protesters are not just perpetuating a confused, mismatched dichotomy, they are perpetuating COVID-19. They are perpetuating death and loss. And they are extending the crippling of our economy.

It's obvious that we need to go back to work. It's obvious that this virus is shattering our economy. But it's also obvious that people are dying and will continue to die, until our government, doctors, scientists and the general public learn to manage COVID-19. Those who are publicly protesting are putting themselves and their families at unbelievable risk, foreshadowing the fate of this country if states reopen too quickly.

For the sake of the 1 million Americans with COVID-19—and for the sake of the tens of thousands who have already lost their lives—please, protesters. We're all in this together.

As long as protests continue, more people will die. More people will be out of work.

If you find yourself in a hospital bed like I did, I can tell you this: You won't be thinking about your liberties.

You'll be thinking about your life—and how firmly you can hold onto it.

remorse, and with a no-holds-barred attitude. These were the words of my wise friend, who grabbed life by the horns and never let go. Ride on brother, ride on!

Until we meet again,

Thomas Thornburgh

Roseville, CA

toll, as does watching bills pile up with few prospects for work, or waiting for a layoff notice, or watching your business disintegrate from behind locked doors. And walking, masked, into a grocery store six weeks after the crisis took root to find empty shelves is a jarring turnabout here in the land of the plenty.

There are some truths that can't be tallied. The resonant truth of this near-global health crisis is that none are safe and all are affected, even if it's just by nagging doubts and dark uncertainties in the corners of our minds.

© 2020 Los Angeles Times

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

R.I.P. Captain Caveman

Richard Gramlich, aka "The Man" and "The PAO," surf on brother! As you come over the top, remember me. You surfed

PANDEMIC

From Page 8

someone from falling ill again.

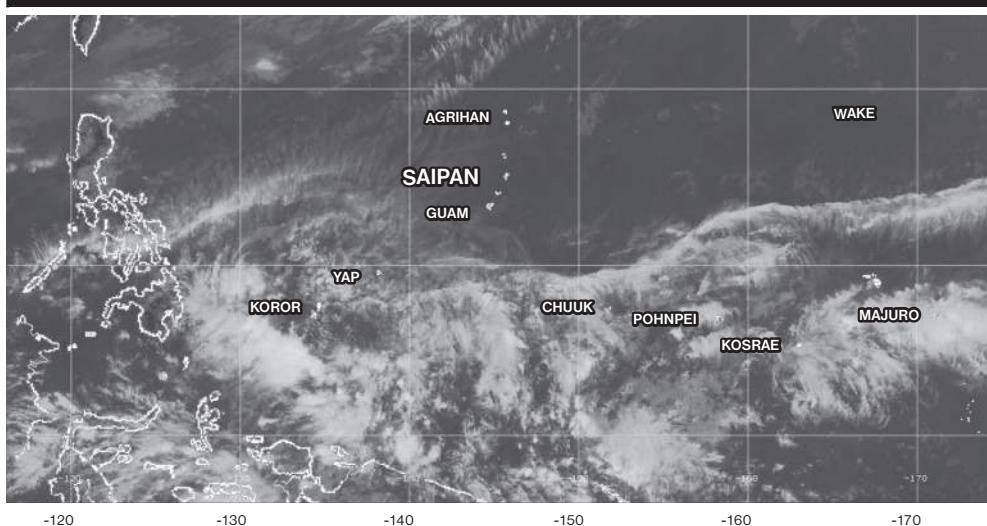
No wonder we're anxious. No wonder we glare at the unmasked, recoil from another person's cough, worry that a throat tickled by seasonal allergies might actually portend something more threatening. We see images of folks frolicking at the beach on a warm spring day and stifle the urge to shout, "What the hell

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
90°	77°	90°	77°	90°
77°	90°	77°	88°	77°
89°	77°	89°	89°	77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A dry season weather pattern will prevail across the Marianas through Friday and only brief showers are expected. A weak trade-wind disturbance will bring mostly cloudy skies and isolated showers to the local area Friday night and Saturday. A large area of scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms generated by low-level convergence will be located south of Guam Tuesday. Most of this activity will remain south of the Marianas but be close enough to generate mostly cloudy skies next Tuesday. A slightly higher pressure gradient over the area will keep winds between 10 and 20 mph through at least Thursday night.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING

AS OF
APRIL 16, 2020

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

- Cashier & Customer Service
- Mondays - Friday: 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 664-4282
- Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2228

Department of Public Works

- Solid Waste Management Division**
- Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill**
- Open all week except Wednesday 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 322-2745

Department of Finance

- Division of Revenue & Taxation**
- CASHIER ONLY
- Mondays - Friday: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
- Tel: (670) 664-1000

CNMI State Medicaid Agency

- Eligibility staff via phone only
- Tuesday - Thursday: 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 664-4880/4882
- Accepting applications and supporting documents via drop-box at Medicaid Office.
- Medicaid application & renewal/redetermination forms must be original.
- Applications/forms available for pick up next to the drop-box or online at: www.medicaid.cnmim.mp

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
- Email: maryann@ovrgov.net

Office of the Attorney General

- Civil & Criminal Divisions**
- Mondays - Friday: 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600

Department of Public Lands

- CASHIER ONLY
- Mondays - Thursday: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54

Office of the Public Defender

- Mondays - Friday: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 234-6503

Saipan Zoning Office

- Available via phone only
- Mondays - Thursday: 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
- Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
- Call or email for more information

Office of the Public Defender

- Mondays - Friday: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Tel: (670) 234-6503

SOCIAL DISTANCING TO BE IMPLEMENTED AT ALL OFFICES

GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE HOTLINE TEL: (670) 287-0046
FOLLOW US @GOVERNORCNMI FOR THE LATEST NEWS & UPDATES

MICRONESIA		
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	89° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	83° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:54 AM	6:34 PM
Friday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Saturday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Sunday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM
Monday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	11:29 AM	-	-
Friday	-	12:48 AM	12:28 PM
Saturday	-	1:38 AM	1:27 PM
Sunday	-	2:27 AM	2:26 PM
Monday	-	3:13 AM	3:26 PM

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website: www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

AROUND THE GLOBE		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	66° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	100° / 70°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	81° / 75°
Honolulu	Windy	83° / 72°
London	Thunderstorm	54° / 43°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	84° / 63°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	97° / 81°
Melbourne	Showers	52° / 50°
Miami	Thunderstorm	83° / 69°
New York	Rain	61° / 55°
Osaka	Sunny	75° / 57°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	61° / 48°
Busan	Rain	55° / 46°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	70° / 55°
Salem	Rain	68° / 47°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	63° / 51°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	75° / 57°
Tokyo	Sunny	73° / 57°
Washington, DC	Rain	65° / 52°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:54 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.83
7:22 AM	LOW TIDE	1.39
11:27 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.65
7:12 PM	LOW TIDE	0.04

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only

Tel: (670) 287-1475

Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call

Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 287-2781 / 287-1773

Tinian: (670) 287-3268

Rota: (670) 287-2553

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

For inquiries regarding parent eligibility requirements for CCDF Program:

Tel: (670) 783-8571 / (670) 783-8572

Email: dcacguerrero@gmail.com / ccdf.jrosario@gmail.com

Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (CCAC)

For Recovery Arts Grant Application Submissions.

Grant Guidelines are available at

<http://www.cnmiartsCouncil.org>

Tel: (670) 287-4585

Email: parkeryobei@gmail.com

Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

For Processing of Federal 106 Consultations Call

Tel: (670) 789-1986

Email: rchong.cnmihpo@gmail.com

SOCIAL DISTANCING TO BE IMPLEMENTED AT ALL OFFICES

GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE HOTLINE TEL: (670) 287-0046

Business



Sura Saipan opened in 2018 and is located along Beach Road in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



For lunch or dinner, Sura Saipan's spicy beef bulgogi is available for only \$7.

For more information, call (670) 233-4745 or (670) 483-6594. Visit their Facebook page: Sura Saipan.



For lunch or dinner, Sura Saipan's Spicy Squid is available for only \$7.

Sura Saipan makes you love Korean food

By BEA CABRERA

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com

CORRESPONDENT

Find the dishes you see on your favorite K drama series at Sura Saipan located along Beach Road in Garapan. Whether its beef bulgogi and spicy pork or squid with all the side dishes, you are assured of getting that authentic Korean taste.

Going on its second year, Sura Saipan did not close albeit continues to serve the

"Our management took

community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We never closed and continued on with the best way we know how to serve customers. We never ceased to use healthy and fresh ingredients in our dishes and our staff is always friendly and welcoming," said general manager Michelle Park

over the business in October 2018 specifically after Super Typhoon Yutu... whether it is a super typhoon or a pandemic, we are always here to serve our customers," Park added.

Known for its delicious dishes and lunch buffet, Sura Saipan is currently concentrat-

ing on three menu options. "These are spicy pork bulgogi with rice, beef bulgogi with rice, and spicy squid with rice. Each dish includes side dishes like kimchi, coleslaw, and seaweed salad for only \$7," Park said.

"Three or more orders can be delivered for a minimal fee of \$2 so your food arrives to you fresh and warm. For call-in orders, you don't need to come in the restaurant because we can bring your order to your car, similar to a drive-th-

ru. So it is convenient and safe for customers," Park added

Sura Saipan is open from Monday to Sunday 11am-5pm. For more information, call (670) 233-4745 or (670) 483-6594. Visit their Facebook page: Sura Saipan.

Trump orders meat processing plants to remain open

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump took executive action Tuesday to order meat processing plants to stay open amid concerns over growing coronavirus cases and the impact on the nation's food supply.

The order uses the Defense Production Act to classify meat processing as critical infrastructure to try to prevent a shortage of chicken, pork and other meat on supermarket shelves. Unions fired back, saying the White House was jeopardizing lives and prioritizing cold cuts over workers' health.

More than 20 meatpacking plants have closed temporarily under pressure from local authorities and their own workers because of the virus, including two of the nation's

largest, one in Iowa and one in South Dakota. Others have slowed production as workers have fallen ill or stayed home to avoid getting sick.

"Such closures threaten the continued functioning of the national meat and poultry supply chain, undermining critical infrastructure during the national emergency," the order states.

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents 1.3 million food and retail workers, said Tuesday that 20 food-processing and meatpacking union workers in the U.S. have died of the virus. An estimated 6,500 are sick or have been exposed while working near someone who tested positive, the union says.

As a result, industry leaders have warned that consumers could see meat shortages in a matter of days. Tyson Foods Inc., one of the world's largest food companies, ran a full-page advertisement in The New York Times and other newspapers Sunday warning, "The food supply chain is breaking."

"As pork, beef and chicken plants are being forced to close, even for short periods of time, millions of pounds of meat will disappear from the supply chain," it read.

Tyson suspended operations at its pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa after a slew of infections, and Smithfield Foods halted production at its plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, after an outbreak infected 853 workers there.

Gov't OKs \$50B in small biz loans, banks complain of snags

NEW YORK (AP)—The government says it has approved an additional \$50 billion in loans to small businesses, although banks are complaining that a bottleneck at the Small Business Administration is severely slowing the process.

Banking industry groups said Tuesday that the SBA's loan processing system is still unable to handle the heavy volume of loan applications from business owners trying to get aid under the Paycheck Protection Program, part of the government's \$2 trillion coronavirus rescue package.

"Today is just another slow, frustrating slog for getting PPP loans through," said Paul Merski, a vice president at the Independent Community Bankers of America.

The government's small

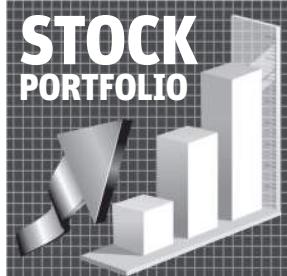
business loan program was replenished with \$310 billion and started taking applications again Monday. Without addressing any glitches, President Donald Trump said at a press conference with small business owners Tuesday that twice as many users had accessed the SBA's processing system as on any day during the first round of funding, during which about 1.7 million loans totaling \$349 billion were approved.

At Bank of America, which submitted 184,000 applications by Monday morning and has tried sending in another 48,000 since then, only 1,000 have been approved, according to a source familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about

the process.

Tuesday afternoon the SBA said about 476,000 loans had been approved totaling more than \$52 billion. Trump said most of the loans approved were for smaller amounts, an indication that loans were going to smaller companies. The average loan during the first round of funding was \$206,000.

The loans are aimed at helping small businesses retain workers or rehire those who they laid off in response to the virus outbreak. Any money from the loan used toward payroll will be forgiven. Restaurants, retailers, gyms and other businesses were forced to shut down to try to contain the virus's spread, and other companies have seen a steep drop in revenue as customers stayed home or cut back their spending.



LEADING INDICATORS

S&P	DOW	NASDAQ
2,896.50	24,255.00	8,831.00
+29.25	+210.00	+111.25
+1.02%	+0.87%	+1.28%

In U.S. dollar terms

EXCHANGE RATES

	Hong Kong Dollar	7.75	Russian Ruble	73.46
Australian Dollar	1.53	Indian Rupee	75.15	Singapore Dollar
British Pound	0.80	Japanese Yen	106.55	South Korean Won
Canadian Dollar	1.39	Malaysian Ringgit	4.30	Swiss Franc
Chinese Yuan	6.97	New Zealand Dollar	1.64	Taiwan Dollar
Euro	0.92	Philippine Peso	49.49	Thailand Baht

Nation

Easing lockdowns makes day-to-day choices more complicated

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, ADAM GELLER and ERIC OLSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Things were so much clearer when just about everything was locked down.

Now, with states lifting coronavirus restrictions piecemeal and by often arbitrary timetables, Americans are facing bewildering decisions about what they should and should not do to protect their health, their livelihoods and their neighbors.

Is it safe to join the crowds at the beach or eat at a restaurant? To visit the elderly parents you haven't seen in nearly two months? To reopen a struggling business?

In many cases, the less-than-satisfying answer from the experts is: It depends.

"There will never be a perfect amount of protection," said Josh Santarpia, a microbiology expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center who is studying the coronavirus. "It's a personal risk assessment. Everybody has to decide, person by person, what risk they're willing to tolerate."

The quandary comes as the confirmed death toll from coronavirus in the U.S. on Tuesday surpassed the 58,220 American service members killed in Vietnam, according to Johns Hopkins University. Globally, at least 216,000 have died, thought the true toll is undoubtedly much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

Pence comes under fire for going maskless at Mayo Clinic

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Vice President Mike Pence chose not to wear a face mask Tuesday during a tour of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, an apparent violation of the world-renowned medical center's policy requiring them.

Video feeds show that Pence did not wear a mask when he met with a Mayo employee who has recovered from COVID-19 and is now donating plasma, even though everyone else in the room appeared to be wearing one. He was also maskless when he visited a lab where Mayo conducts coronavirus tests.

And Pence was the only participant not to wear a mask during a roundtable discussion on Mayo's coronavirus testing and research programs. All the other participants did, including Food and Drug Administration chief Stephen Hahn, top Mayo officials, Gov. Tim Walz and U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn.

With the crisis easing in many places, France, Spain and Greece were among the latest countries to announce their plans for restarting their economies. As governments make their moves to reopen businesses and schools, the next decisions made will be personal.

Jill Faust, 53, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, said she would hesitate to eat at an indoor restaurant when such businesses are allowed to reopen in her community Friday.

"We would have to know ahead of time what precautions they're taking," she said, citing the way some restaurants

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom said schoolchildren could return to classrooms as early as July, though a formal decision had not yet been made.

President Donald Trump

to these researchers, these incredible healthcare personnel, and look them in the eye and say 'thank you.'"

Pence is not the only White House official who has shown a reluctance for face masks. When President Donald Trump announced new federal guidelines recommending that Americans wear face coverings when in public, he immediately said he had no intention of following that advice himself, saying, "I'm choosing not to do it."

Pence also went without a mask a week earlier when he visited a GE Healthcare facility that makes ventilators. Some at the event in Madison, Wisconsin, wore masks and others did not. The White House said then that Pence had tested negative for the coronavirus and suggested that under the guidelines developed by the coronavirus task force there was no need for him to wear a mask.



AP
A PSE&G utility worker watches the Navy's Blue Angels and the Air Force's Thunderbirds conduct "a collaborative salute" to honor those battling the COVID-19 pandemic with a flyover of New York and New Jersey, Tuesday, April 28, 2020, in this view from Jersey City, N.J.

Johns Hopkins tally.

In China, where the pandemic began, cases have slowed to a trickle from the peak in February and March that even forced a delay in the country's ceremonial parliament meeting. State media reported Wednesday the National People's Congress would convene on May 22.

In the U.S., the uncertainty ahead was spotlighted in Georgia after businesses such as barber shops and tattoo parlors were given the go-ahead to reopen.

Savannah Mayor Van Johnson said people could find the changes perplexing.

"In reality we're under a stay-at-home order until April 30," Johnson said. "Yet you can go get your nails done, you can go get a tattoo, you can go to movie theaters, you can go to bowling alleys. It's those kinds of things that leave people confused."

may rely on limited seating, well-spaced tables, masks for employees and disposable cups and plates. Even then, she said, it might not be worth the trouble.

"Going to a restaurant to me is this lovely, relaxing experience where you can sit with people and relax and catch up after a long day. If your experience is going to be limited by all these safety concerns, why spend the money?" she said.

As restrictions loosen, health authorities will be watching closely for any sign of a resurgence of the virus.

On Tuesday, for example, Germany reported an uptick in the infection rate since some small businesses were allowed to reopen just over a week ago. But it was too soon to say whether the loosening was to blame.

Around the world, confirmed infections exceeded 3 million—including 1 million in the U.S., according to the

Lawsuit: US citizens with immigrant spouses should get help

PHOENIX (AP)—The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has sued the federal government over its denial of coronavirus relief payments to U.S. citizens who are married to immigrants without social security numbers.

The lawsuit was filed in Maryland on Tuesday on behalf of six American citizens who were denied coronavirus relief checks because they filed and paid taxes with a spouse who has what's known as an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, or a way for immigrants without legal status to still pay federal taxes, which millions do.

MALDEF says the Treasury Department is violating Americans' First and Fifth Amendments by denying them payment simply because of who they are married to. Congress last month passed a \$2.2 trillion package to help businesses, workers and a health care system staggered by the coronavirus. Many Americans had their share deposited into their accounts in the last couple of weeks.

It's estimated that 2 million U.S. citizens or lawful

permanent residents are married to people without social security numbers, although it's unclear how many of them file jointly with them.

"All of the families are very much like other families in the U.S. They have children at home, they are facing contraction of the economy and they still have to pay their rent, and buy groceries and buy gas," said Nina Perales, MALDEF's vice president of litigation.

Christina Segundo-Hernandez, who lives in Fort Worth, Texas, is one of the plaintiffs in the case. Segundo-Hernandez is a U.S. citizen married to a Mexican immigrant who pays federal taxes through his ITIN. The couple, married eight years, file jointly each year. They're both working fewer hours because of the coronavirus pandemic, and they've fallen behind on bills.

Getting a coronavirus relief check would have helped.

"I would have been able to fill up my refrigerator for my kids," said Segundo-Hernandez, who has four children. "I think it needs to be known that there's people out there

that are doctors and things like that that are putting their lives at risk going through the same thing. They're being betrayed by their government because of who they're married to."

David Hessell-Cercado, a fourth-grade teacher in Los Angeles, is an American citizen married to a Mexican immigrant who is close to getting his permanent resident status. Hessell-Cercado isn't involved in the lawsuit, but will also not benefit from the coronavirus relief payments that went out to millions of Americans recently.

Hessell-Cercado said he feels lucky to still work, but thinks it's unfair that Americans are being left out of the coronavirus relief package because of who they married.

"What hurt more was just the sheer meanness of it," he said. "Anyone who marries someone and goes through an immigration process already has to deal with years and years and years of just delays and obstacles and hurdles to get over. It just seems like something else that they put out there just to sort of be mean to us."

Asia

A look at past disappearances of N. Korean leaders, officials

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—While Kim Jong Un's two-week absence has inspired speculation and rumors that he is gravely ill, he is not the first member of North Korea's ruling elite to disappear from public view.

Some absences were caused by real trouble, including deaths, illness or purges. But frequently the so-called disappearances have simply shown the disconnect between insatiable curiosity about what's happening inside the isolated, nuclear-armed nation and the thick cloak of secrecy surrounding its leadership.

A look at past cases of missing North Korean officials and when reports about the demise of leaders were premature:

KIM IL SUNG

Before his death in 1994, there was arguably no person South Koreans hated and feared more than North Korea's state founder Kim Il Sung. His forces launched a surprise attack on the South in June 1950, triggering a devastating war that drew massive intervention by the United States and China and killed and injured millions of people before an armistice halted fighting three years later.

He also dispatched commandos in a failed attempt to assassinate the South Korean president in 1968 and sent agents to plant bombs that killed 21 people, including several South Korean cabinet ministers, during a presidential visit to Myanmar in 1983.

When South Korean newspapers reported him as dead in November 1986, the public, at least for a few hours, was overwhelmed with euphoria but also panic about instability on the border.

The reports began circulating on Nov. 16 when the Chosun Ilbo published a short story by its Tokyo correspondent who reported rumors in Japan that Kim Il Sung had died. Things took a strange turn the next day when South Korea's military spokesman announced that the North Koreans used loudspeakers on the mine-strewn border to announce that he was shot to death.

China to convene Congress, showing confidence in virus fight

BEIJING (AP)—China has decided to hold the annual meeting of its ceremonial parliament late next month after postponing it for weeks because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The official Xinhua News Agency on Wednesday said

Chosun released an extra edition to report the story on Nov. 17—a Monday when newspapers hadn't usually published—before using seven pages to describe Kim Il Sung's assassination on Nov. 18, under the now infamous front-page headline "Kim Il Sung shot dead."

Other newspapers wrote similar stories, adding to a frenzy that abruptly ended hours later when Kim Il Sung appeared alive and well at an airport in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, to greet a visiting Mongolian delegation.

Chosun, South Korea's biggest newspaper by circulation, never published a correction. But it formally apologized over the story last month while marking the 100th anniversary of its founding.

The newspaper also apologized over a 2013 report that said North Korean singer and senior ruling party member Hyon Song Wol had been executed. Hyon reappeared in public in May 2014 and is now considered as one of the most powerful women in North Korea, accompanying Kim Jong Un to several international summits.

KIM JONG IL

Kim Jong Il, the famously reclusive father of the current ruler, also was the subject of countless reports and rumors about his demise.

In 2004, a massive explosion at a North Korean train station on its border with China inspired rumors of an assassination attempt as he had passed through hours earlier on his way back from Beijing. The collision of two fuel-carrying trains reportedly killed and injured thousands of people, but a link to the leader's travel was never confirmed.

Chatter about Kim Jong Il's death following his 2008 stroke became so frequent that it prompted South Korea's financial regulator in 2009 to investigate whether the rumors were being deliberately spread to manipulate stock markets.

When Kim Jong Il did die in December 2011, following years of deteriorating health and diminishing public appear-

ances, the outside world had no clue until the North's state media announced it two days later.

His once-powerful sister, Kim Kyong Hui, has had her own share of premature reports about her death. CNN on May 2015 cited a North Korean defector to report that Kim Jong Un had her poisoned to death. The 73-year-old made her first public appearance in about six years in January, sitting near her nephew during a concert.

KIM JONG UN

Conflicting reports over the past week have said Kim is either "gravely ill," "in a vegetative state" or "perfectly fine" following heart surgery that may or may not have happened.

In 2014, Kim vanished from the public eye for nearly six weeks before reappearing with a cane. South Korea's spy agency said he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

In 2016, South Korean media quoted intelligence officials as saying Kim had had a former military chief executed for corruption and other charges. But months later, North Korea's state media showed Ri Yong Gil alive and serving in new senior posts.

Kim Jong Un was last seen in public on April 11 when he presided over a ruling party meeting on coronavirus prevention. He even missed the April 15 birthday celebration for his late grandfather Kim Il Sung for the first time since taking power in 2011. State media have since reported his engagement in routine, but non-public activities. They say he's sent greetings to the leaders of Syria, Cuba and South Africa and expressed gratitude to citizens of merit, including workers building tourist facilities in the coastal town of Wonsan, which is where some speculate he is staying.

While it's possible that Kim could pop up anytime, continuing a family tradition of media resurrections, some experts say that his health will become an increasing factor in years ahead, considering his weight, smoking habits and other supposed health problems.

The convening of the full session, which would encompass about 3,000 members, indicates China's growing confidence that it has largely overcome the pandemic that was first detected in China late last year.

World

AMID CHURCH-STATE DEBATE Pope urges virus lockdown obedience

ROME (AP)—Pope Francis waded into the church-state debate about virus-imposed lockdowns of religious services, calling Tuesday for "prudence and obedience" to government protocols to prevent infections from surging again.

Francis' appeal came just two days after Italian bishops bitterly complained that the Italian government offered no provisions for Masses to resume in its plan to reopen Italian business, social and sporting life starting May 4.

While it wasn't clear if Francis intended to send a different message than the bishops, his appeal for obedience and prudence was in line with his previous calls to protect the most vulnerable, and for economic interests to take a back seat to shows of solidarity.

At the same time, Francis has certainly chafed at the lockdown, saying early on that he felt like he was in a "cage" and lamenting more recently that the church isn't really "Church" without a community of faithful present and the administration of sacraments.

"As we are beginning to have protocols to get out of quarantine, let us pray that the Lord gives his people, all of us, the grace of prudence and obedience to the protocols so that the pandemic doesn't return," Francis said Tuesday.

Italian Premier Giuseppe



AP
Pope Francis delivers his blessing from the window of his studio overlooking an empty St. Peter's Square, due to anti-coronavirus lockdown measures, at the Vatican, Sunday, April 26, 2020.

Conte's government announced Sunday that funerals could resume starting May 4, but there was no information on when the faithful could attend Mass.

In response, the Italian bishops' conference expressed outrage that its proposals of safety protocols had apparently been ignored.

The bishops said they "cannot accept that freedom of worship is compromised."

They argued the government should have distinguished between its duty to provide health guidance and the church's right to "organize the life of the Christian community, respecting the measures but in full autonomy."

Conte's office hastily responded that it was working on protocols to allow the resumption of liturgical services as soon as possible but "in conditions of maximum

security."

Francis weighed in on the fraught issue at the start of morning Mass celebrated alone in the chapel of the Vatican hotel where he lives.

Francis has been celebrating daily Mass to empty pews in observance of the Vatican's own lockdown measures, which mirror those of Italy, the epicenter of the European pandemic.

The Vatican has recorded 10 positive cases, the last one confirmed Tuesday in a Holy See official who tested positive but is now asymptomatic. All the official's colleagues have tested negative, the Vatican said in a statement.

When Conte locked all of Italy down in March, Francis' vicar of Rome sparked an outcry among some of the faithful when he ordered all churches shut to comply.

Bolsonaro's latest crisis threatens Brazil's virus response

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—As Brazil careens toward a full-blown public health emergency and economic meltdown, President Jair Bolsonaro has managed to add a third ingredient to the toxic mix: political crisis. Even if it doesn't speed his downfall, it will render Brazilians more vulnerable to the pandemic.

Bolsonaro's decision last week to replace the federal police chief—and cross his popular justice minister, Sérgio Moro, who quit and alleged impropriety—has sparked an investigation into the president's actions that will be conducted by the federal police itself. Already the scandal threatens to supplant coronavirus as the day's most urgent matter.

"He is dividing the attention of the government and of society, and draining efforts and energy that, in such a grave moment of pandemic, should be exclusively concen-

trated on efforts to fight COVID-19," said Paulo Calmon, a professor of political science at the University of Brasilia.

During the announcement of his resignation Friday, Moro said Bolsonaro told him on multiple occasions that he wanted to replace the federal police chief with someone who would give him access to police investigations, some of which reportedly target one or more of the president's sons. That pitched the administration into turmoil and prompted Bolsonaro's own prosecutor-general to call for a Supreme Court investigation.

Irate Brazilians observing government stay-at-home recommendations because of the virus banged pots and pans from their windows in protest.

Justice Celso de Mello authorized the probe into Bolsonaro's actions late Monday, including possible crimes of coercion and corruption, and

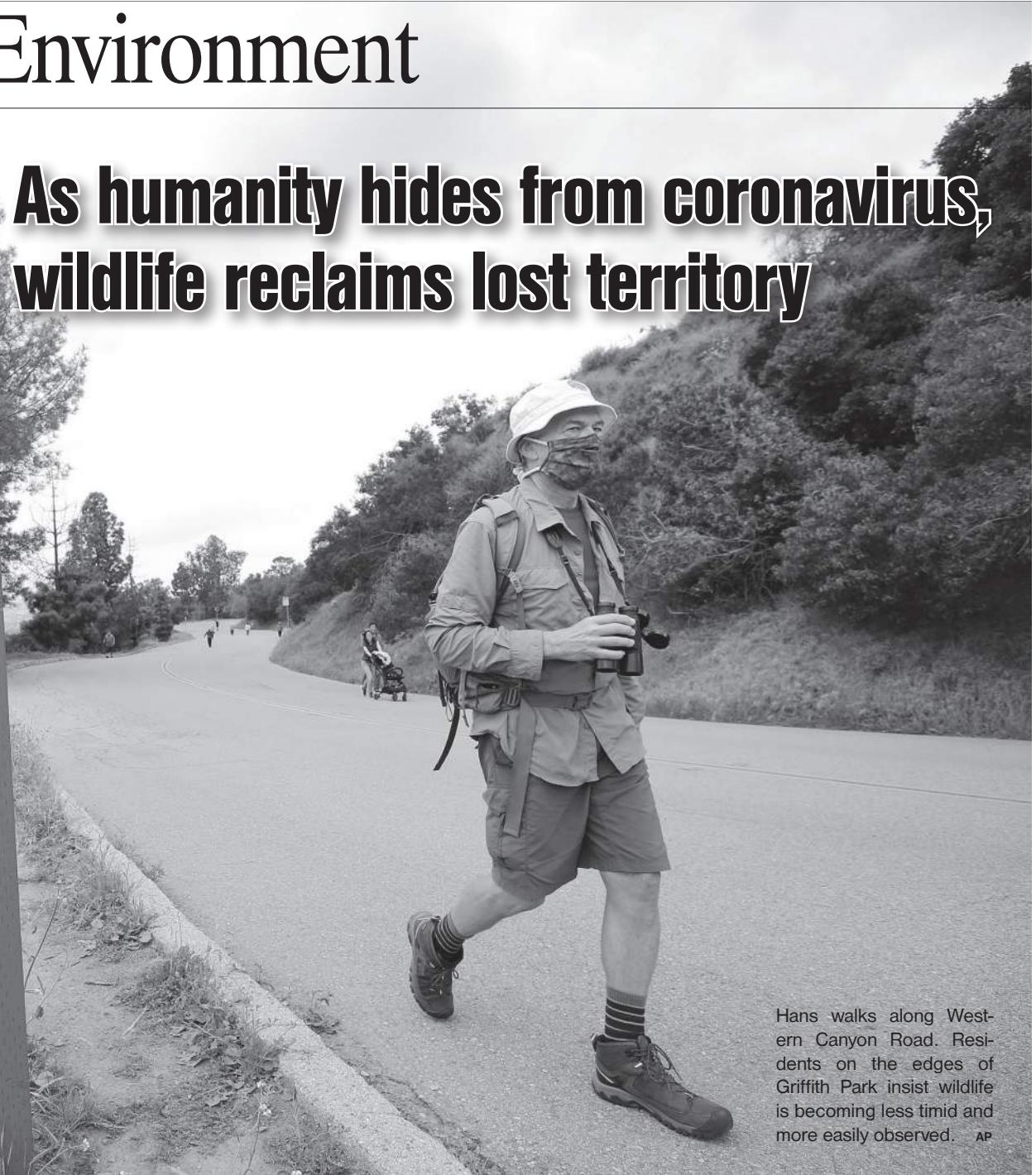
gave the federal police 60 days to question Moro.

"The President of the Republic—who is also subject to the laws, like any other citizen of this country—is not exonerated from criminal liability stemming from his acts," Mello wrote in his decision, which was published on the Supreme Court's website.

The criminal probe and Moro's resignation threaten to weaken Bolsonaro's standing at a time when he already has come under fire for opposition to state efforts to control the rapidly spreading coronavirus. More than 71,000 Brazilians have been infected and more than 5,000 have died – vast under-counts according to experts who point to the country's widespread lack of testing. Bolsonaro also tossed his popular health minister, Luiz Henrique Mandetta, who had supported confinement measures put in place by state governors.

Environment

As humanity hides from coronavirus, wildlife reclaims lost territory



Hans walks along Western Canyon Road. Residents on the edges of Griffith Park insist wildlife is becoming less timid and more easily observed. AP

By LOUIS SAHAGUN
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES—Naturalist Gerry Hans stood in the middle of a lonely road in Griffith Park on Saturday, inhaled deeply through his face mask and admired the natural sights and sounds of an oddly serene landscape that typically draws thousands of visitors each weekend.

“It’s sheer heaven not hearing the deafening clatter of tourist helicopters hovering over the Hollywood sign,” he said, with an appreciative sweep of his eyes.

As California’s coronavirus lockdown enters its second month, some residents on the edges of Griffith Park and other urban ecosystems swear that Mother Nature is reclaiming territories that once echoed with humanity’s tumult.

On message boards, shut-ins trade emotional “coyote talk,” recounting the movements of stealthy canids as they search for prey along quiet streets. Others share snapshots of hawks and owls nesting in the trees of city parks and center dividers, and of raccoons and rats raiding trash cans, suggesting that — by bits and pieces — wildlife is restaking old claims.

Although local experts insist

these creatures were always there, and were just ignored in more industrious times, shelter-at-homers are enjoying a rare glimpse into Southern California’s natural heritage.

On Hans’ expedition Saturday, the loudest sounds were the trills and chatter of resident woodpeckers and migrating birds — western tanagers, black-headed grosbeaks, hooded orioles and warblers — moving through the boughs of sycamores, pine trees and gnarled oaks.

Just out of view, in the park’s canyons and slopes, lurked opossums, skunks, coyotes, deer, bobcats and a lone mountain lion known as P-22. An eerily quiet parade of visitors clad in ball caps, running shoes and face masks ambled along a stretch of Western Canyon Road that is usually choked with cars and tour buses.

Roadkill of western gray squirrels, brush rabbits, ring-necked snakes and western toads has plummeted to zero, according to Hans, a wildlife expert with the nonprofit Friends of Griffith Park. And for the first time in memory, rare peregrine falcons have been seen swooping over the Hollywood sign, instead of in the vicinity of downtown skyscrapers, where they nest and dine on pigeons.

While naturalists like Hans have thrilled to the prospect of new wildlife sightings, some Southern California residents have been rattled by their brushes with the great outdoors.

On March 18, a resident of the Villeurbanne townhomes in Orange posted this warning on Nextdoor: “This evening while walking my dogs, a pack of six coyotes saw us, stopped running and two started heading my way. I held the dogs close and started yelling at the coyotes, then they stopped long enough for me to duck behind the houses getting in the back gate. So scary!”

Responses the next day included this one: “The coyotes think we all moved away with no cars driving around.”

Wildlife biologists, however, say this rich urban ecosystem was always there, and it is too early to know how the wild side of Los Angeles and Southern California is responding to the month-old lockdown.

For example, research biologists have seen no evidence that Southern California’s increasingly isolated and inbred populations of mountain lions are benefiting from far fewer vehicles on freeways cutting across their ever-shrinking islands of habitat.

“There is no evidence that

the animals that we’re tracking are crossing freeways any more in the last couple of weeks,” said Seth P.D. Riley, wildlife ecologist and branch chief for the National Park Service’s Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. “But that is not too surprising — it is a very short time frame.”

While there are fewer vehicles on roads and freeways these days, there are “still quite a few, from a wildlife perspective, especially during midday, early a.m., and evening hours,” he added. “The couple of animals that have happened to have been near freeways recently have not crossed. Of course, we cannot interview them, sadly, to find out what they are thinking.”

Similarly, research scientist Niamh Quinn, who serves as human-wildlife interactions advisor for UC Cooperative Extension, said none of the five collared coyotes she is studying in the cities of Hacienda Heights, Roland Heights, La Verne and Chino Hills “have changed their behavior yet.”

“I do believe, however, that human behavior has been altered significantly by the lockdown in ways that are closing the gap between us and what’s wild around our own homes — and that’s great, up to a

point,” she said.

She worries that animals may be pushed into closer conflicts with humans. “We have to interact with wildlife from a distance. That is because we still do not know all the diseases that, say, coyotes and rats carry with them.”

Despite reports of emboldened coyotes in urban settings, there is no evidence of an increase in the rate of coyote attacks since the lockdown went into effect, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

In any case, conservationists are rejoicing in the scene at Griffith Park a month after its roads were closed to traffic and its trailheads were blocked to keep out hordes of daytripping parents and children mingling with tourists for a hike up scrubby slopes and canyons.

Directly in front of Hans on Saturday, western gray squirrels casually crossed Fern Dell Drive at Griffith Park’s southwestern edge, near where it had been cordoned off with yellow tape. To the left, woodpeckers hunted for insects in sycamores shading an empty parking lot.

“Follow me. I want to introduce you to some new arrivals,” said Hans, leading up a gentle slope to a flat spot in a grove of oaks. “Hear that chattering up high in the trees?” he

whispered with a smile. “That is the call of Cooper’s hawks fortifying a nest.”

That nest was not the only reason conservationists have plenty to crow about this year. The 2020 Griffith Park raptor survey tallied 122 active hawk, falcon and owl nests — a record jump from 60 nests counted a year ago.

But raptors are sensitive to human disturbance — so sensitive that human activity can cause them to abandon their nests.

“Noisy crowds are a big issue for Griffith Park’s raptors during their breeding season,” Hans said. “Perhaps not quite so much this year. We’ll see.”

Researchers hope a network of strategically placed cameras throughout the nation can provide scientists with a precise picture of how wildlife reacted when the commotion and clatter of urban life from Disneyland to New York City came to a standstill.

“Think of these cameras as unbiased observers,” said Ted Stankowich, a biologist and director of the Mammal Lab at Cal State Long Beach.

“Looking forward to an analysis of the imagery they’ve collected,” he said, “is a case of finding something to be excited about in this horrible time of suffering.”

Life & Style

Hi-tech scans get under skin of 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP)—Researchers using a battery of modern imaging techniques have gotten under the skin of Johannes Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring," but tests haven't answered the key question about the world famous painting's enigmatic subject.

"Who was the girl?" Martine Gosselink, Director of the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague said in an online presentation Tuesday of new research findings. "Spoiler alert: No, sadly we didn't find out who this young lady was and if she ever really existed. But we did get a little closer to her."

What the 2018 research proj-

ect did uncover were details including how the Golden Age Dutch master painted the girl and where he got his pigments.

They even confirmed once and for all that the girl has eyelashes and revealed that she is painted in front of a green curtain that has faded from view. Such is the interest in the painting, that even the subject's facial hair—or apparent lack of it—is the subject of academic debate.

The eyelashes weren't the only hairs researchers found. Microscopic scans also revealed tiny fragments from Vermeer's paintbrushes embedded in the girl's skin.

The painting was placed in a

purpose-built glass room in early 2018 so visitors to the museum could watch as researchers and their hi-tech machines took what amounted to a full-body scan of the work completed by Vermeer around 1665, which is sometimes referred to as the Dutch "Mona Lisa."

The public, however, will have to wait until they can see the museum's star painting in real life. The Mauritshuis, along with all other Dutch museums and galleries, is closed due to restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

The research findings, however, were being placed online, along with explanations from those involved.



In this file photo dated Friday, June 20, 2014, a visitor takes a picture of Johannes Vermeer's 17th century masterpiece Girl with a Pearl Earring, left, during a preview for the press of the renovated Mauritshuis in The Hague, Netherlands.

Among them, scans that mapped the maze of tiny cracks that have formed in the

paint over the years. They will allow the museum to use this research as a baseline to moni-

tor the health of the canvas in coming years.

Analysis of microscopic paint samples was able to pinpoint where the pigments Vermeer used originated. The white lead that forms the earring comes from the Peak District in northern England, the ultramarine blue is ground from lapis lazuli found in what is now Afghanistan and the red is cochineal, made from bugs that live on cactus plants in Mexico and South America.

"It's surprising how much high quality ultramarine Vermeer used in the girl's headscarf," said conservator and project leader Abbie Vandivere. "This blue pigment was more valuable than gold in the 17th century."

Vermeer, however, didn't have to scour the world to get his materials, he most likely bought them in his hometown of Delft.



This combination photo shows, top row from left, media mogul Oprah Winfrey, former President George W. Bush, actress Julia Roberts and musician Yo-Yo Ma, bottom row from left, guru Deepak Chopra, rapper Common, musician Questlove, and actress Jennifer Garner, who are among the participants in the 24-hour livestream event, The Call to Unite, beginning Friday, May 1 at 8 p.m. EDT.

Winfrey, Roberts to appear in global virus relief livestream

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Oprah Winfrey, Julia Roberts and former President George W. Bush will be among 200 star-studded participants in a 24-hour global livestream event.

The Call to Unite event will kick off Friday evening to offer performances and conversations about overcoming the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Event organizers hope participants can help inspire people to "emerge from this crisis better than when it began."

Quincy Jones, Jennifer Garner, Common, Maria Shriver, Questlove, Yo-Yo Ma, Eva Longoria, Naomi Campbell and Alanis Morissette are expected to participate in the event.

Each participant will answer calls in their own way, whether through performing a song, sharing a story or offering a prayer.

The event will be livestreamed at unite.us and on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Twitch, LinkedIn and SiriusXM Stars.

Feud between two brothers is spilling over to their parents

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have two sons in their late 30s. We always thought they got along well and loved each other. Over the past year, they are no longer speaking with each other because of hard feelings over current situations. They live in the same neighborhood.

My husband refuses to stay at either one's house now when we visit from out of town because he's so upset at the turn of events. (We have been getting a hotel room.) When I visit on my own, I stay with our older son because there is no place to stay with the younger one.

The disagreement between my husband and me is I want to continue to visit as I have, understanding there are differences but hoping they will come to a solution. I refuse to choose one over the other, and I'm trying to be consistent with love and be a good role model. Both of our sons know this.

My husband is upset with me because I don't support his position of not staying at either house until they make up. This is creating more friction in a situation that is already breaking our hearts. What do you recommend? We have made our suggestions for a resolution, but these are grown men who must do the work themselves.

MOM IN A DIFFICULT SPOT

DEAR MOM: I recommend you continue to do what makes you comfortable. Your sons both know you love them. If your husband thinks that your staying in a hotel

—provided you can find one during the current shutdowns—will somehow manipulate your sons into settling their differences more quickly, he is mistaken. It hasn't worked so far. As you stated, your "boys" are grown men. I agree with you that they will have to hash this out on their own.

DEAR ABBY: My fiance often leaves memory cards out on his dresser after a day of being home alone. I was by myself one day and looked at them. There were photos of a nude woman wrapped in his bed sheet on his bed back in 2018. In them, she is posing. We were dating when they were taken, but not yet living together or engaged.

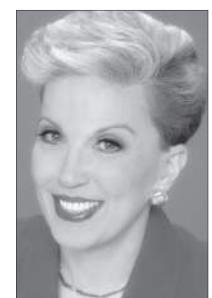
He dabbles in photography, but never mentioned this or informed me he was doing this shoot. I found another set from 2017—prior to our relationship—that is not as "tastefully" done. Do I have reason for concern? I thought these things were professionally done off-site. His bedroom, though?

UNEASY IN NEW YORK

DEAR UNEASY: If the photos were taken before you and your fiance were exclusive, I doubt you have any reason to worry. However, rather than ask me if you have anything to be concerned about, any questions you have about his "dabbling" would be better addressed directly to him.

DEAR ABBY: I have a grown daughter whom my ex-husband named "Brenda." (It is her middle name.) She's married, a

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

mother of five and lived abroad for quite some time. She's back in the U.S. now and living 50 miles away from our family. She now wants to be called by her first name, which is "Riley." The problem is, everyone here at home knows her as Brenda. Presently, I still call her Brenda. How can this be resolved?

NOT HAPPY IN THE SOUTH

DEAR NOT HAPPY: Resolve this by using the name your adult daughter prefers. If you refuse, expect the distance between you to become greater than 50 miles.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

NBA 'more willing than ever' to delay season



NEW YORK—The coronavirus pandemic halted the 2019-20 NBA season less than a month before the playoffs were originally scheduled to begin. While a return to play is still on the table, the beginning of next season could be impacted by the virus as well.

According to ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski, the NBA is considering delaying the start of the 2020-21 season beyond next fall.

"They are more willing than ever to delay the start of next season," Wojnarowski said on Sports Center with Scott Van Pelt. "And part of that reason is that might give them more time next year to be able to have fans in the building. But, next season, the fear of having to start the year in empty arenas. And if they were going to start in their normal time, it's hard to imagine that there would be fans in the stands."

Delaying the start of next season would afford the league more time to play the 2020 playoffs and still have the ability to give everyone an offseason and full schedule for 2020-21.

Numerous players have expressed the need for an abbreviated regular season and training camp before any post-season action can commence.

"I think as much time as they can buy for themselves, I think the league is willing to do that right now," he said. "And they're trying to look at everything. And this isn't just 'let's figure out the next couple months and this season.' This is a two-, three-, four-year look moving forward."

As of now, team facilities remain closed. The NBA received significant pushback from teams about the idea of re-opening practice facilities in states with loosening social distancing laws, though that would not have been put into motion before the beginning of May.

In an ideal situation given the current circumstances, the NBA would like to have the NBA Finals wrapped up by Labor Day weekend in September, according to Wojnarowski.

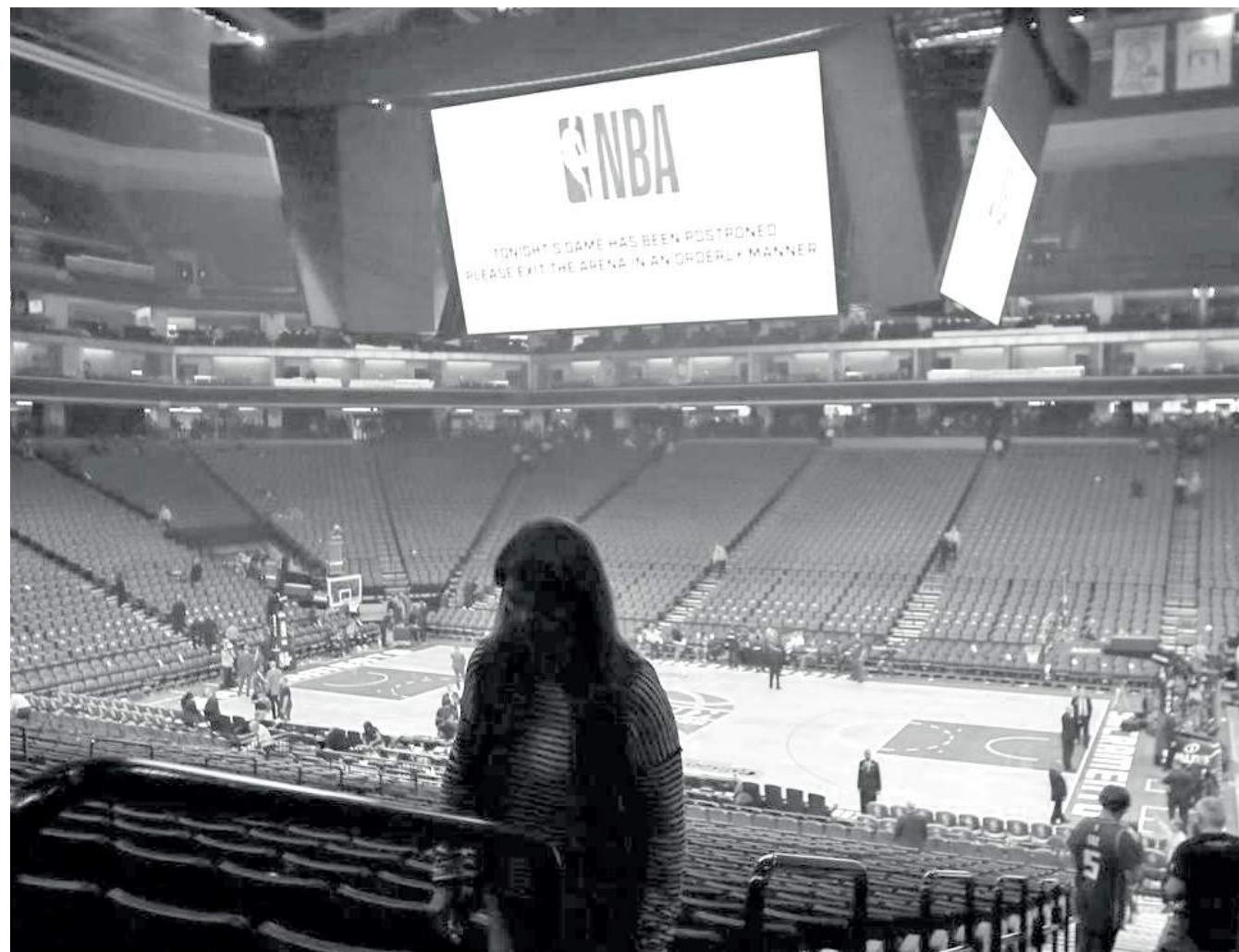
NBA 2K League starts May 5

They're back!

On Tuesday the NBA 2K League announced they its season would officially start back up with remote play on May 5th.

The season was originally slated to begin on March 24th, but like the real sport it emulates, it was postponed due to the coronavirus.

Now, rather than all meet-



ing in New York, the 23 teams will play each other remotely from the comfort of their home studios.

Games will begin at 7 p.m. ET every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday with four distinct matchups each night.

Each team is scheduled to play at least eight matches that will count toward its regular-season record.

Games simulcast live on the NBA 2K League's Twitch and YouTube channels.

The 2020 season will once again include three in-season tournaments—the TipOff, Turn, and Ticket.

The NBA 2K League will implement an innovative production model that allows for a remote broadcast in all 23 team markets and NBA 2K League broadcasters to announce games in their homes from a virtual NBA 2K League Studio while switching between games occurring at the same time.

"We are very excited to get the 2020 NBA 2K League season started. Blazer5 has something to prove this season on the court, and we hope the competition provides entertainment and allows for a feeling of community and connection during these unprecedented times," Blazer5 operations manager Cameron McAlees said.

The first week will take place from May 5 through May 8, while the Blazer5 game schedule will be released at a later date.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Lakers have repaid a loan

of roughly \$4.6 million from coronavirus business relief funds after learning the program had been depleted.

The Lakers applied for the loan under the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, a part of the federal government's \$2.2 trillion stimulus package. The

Lakers' request was granted in the first round of distribution, but after the fund ran out of money in less than two weeks, the team returned its loan, as did several wealthier business including Shake Shack and AutoNation.

"The Lakers qualified for and received a loan under the

Payroll Protection Program," the statement read. "However, once we found out the funds from the program had been depleted, we repaid the loan so that financial support would be directed to those most in need. The Lakers remain completely committed to supporting both our em-

ployees and our community."

ESPN first reported the Lakers' decision. The Treasury Department issued further guidance for the loan program last week, asking companies not to apply for the funds if they don't need the cash to survive.

The Lakers qualified for the program because they have only about 300 employees. But the team is thought to be the NBA's second-most valuable franchise, with Forbes estimating a value of roughly \$4 billion.

The 16-time NBA champions play in the nation's second-largest media market, and their current roster led by superstars LeBron James and Anthony Davis was on top of the Western Conference when the NBA suspended play last month.

The Lakers haven't furloughed or fired any employees during the coronavirus pandemic, and the franchise doesn't plan to make any cutbacks. The team's top executives agreed to defer 20% of their salaries until later this year or early next year. (NBC)

CP3 confirms Curry-Thompson trade offer

SAN FRANCISCO—The Warriors reportedly offered to trade Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson to New Orleans for Chris Paul in 2011. But the deal fell apart when Paul refused to sign an extension with Golden State.

Then-Warriors general manager Larry Riley denied the story. But Paul confirmed it.

Yeah, I remember it. True story. Yup. That happened with a few teams. I actually never wanted to come out west. I'm born and raised on the East Coast. So, I never was crazy about L.A. and all that until I finally got out here and lived out here. But at that time, all I knew really about the Bay—because I had been there to play the games or whatever—and everything was so just hilly, and I just thought about "Full House," Paul said.

Ethan Strauss—who first reported the Curry-and-Thompson-for-Paul offer in his book, "The Victory Machine" —specifically said Bob Myers made the offer. Now Golden State's general manager, Myers was then the Warriors' assistant general manager on track to get pro-



In this May 10, 2019 file photo, Houston Rockets' Chris Paul (3) is defended by Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry during the second half of Game 6 of a second-round NBA playoff series in Houston.

moted to lead executive.

So, it's possible Riley didn't know about the offer (which would sure make Golden State look dysfunctional at that time). Either way, Riley probably shouldn't so directly call the reporting false—though he

has a clear incentive to do so. Perhaps, there's room for middle ground. Paul might have known of a Warriors trade offer without knowing the specific players involved.

But Strauss has earned the benefit of the doubt.

Kings to keep Divac, Walton

Kings owner Vivek Ranadive reportedly showed his frustration with general manager Vlade Divac and coach Luke Walton earlier this season.

But sources say Divac and Walton appear very likely to remain (their contracts run through the 2022-23 season).

After starting 15-29, Sacramento has since gone 13-7. Winning cures most ills.

But the Kings will still likely miss the playoffs, and pressure will only increase—especially on Divac.

Sacramento already has a highly paid shooting guard in Buddy Hield and still plans to pay impending restricted free agent Bogdan Bogdanovic. De'Aaron Fox will also be eligible for a contract extension this offseason. As teams get more expensive, expectations rise. (NBC)

Rams chasing 49ers, Seahawks, and Cards

CALIFORNIA (AP)—A year ago, the Los Angeles Rams were fresh off a Super Bowl trip and back-to-back NFC West titles, feeling good about where they stood in the division.

Now they seem to be looking up at the competition in the NFL's toughest division. While the Rams got rid of cornerstone players Todd Gurley and Brandin Cooks because of bloated contracts and dwindling production, their counterparts got stronger.

Arizona got promising second-year quarterback Kyler Murray one of the game's most talented receivers, acquiring DeAndre Hopkins from Houston. It then landed a top defensive player in the draft in do-everything Isaiah Simmons.

Seattle has added complementary pieces and will always be a threat with Russell Wilson at quarterback.

The defending NFC champion 49ers filled two big holes in the first round when they drafted defensive tackle Jevon Kinlaw and receiver Brandon Aiyuk. Then coach Kyle Shanahan was able to replace retiring six-time Pro Bowl left tackle Joe Staley with seven-time Pro Bowler Trent Williams—at a cost of only a pair of mid-round picks.

That didn't exactly make Rams coach Sean McVay excited for his good friend.

"Oh yeah, I couldn't be happier about one of the better players at that position going to a division opponent," he said sarcastically. "So fired up for the 49ers. You know, it's really great for them. I'm really happy for the Cardinals to get DeAndre Hopkins. But other than that, thanks for reminding me I need to go drink a couple more beers."

The NFL's best division has gotten better after posting a .602 combined winning percentage, tied for sixth highest for any division in the current eight-sector format that began in 2002. That's nothing new for the NFC West, which has had the best record of any division over the past nine seasons, with five of the past eight NFC champions.

The 49ers wanted to keep as many of the pieces from last year's NFC champions as possible. The three main players lost were big ones: star DT DeForest Buckner traded to Indianapolis, receiver Emmanuel Sanders leaving in free agency for New Orleans, and Staley retiring.

They believe they found capable replacements in Kinlaw, Aiyuk and Williams.

"We feel we should've won



AP
In this Dec. 29, 2019 file photo, Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley, right, is tackled by Arizona Cardinals cornerback Patrick Peterson during first half of an NFL game in Los Angeles.

more time to throw thanks to LT D.J. Humphries and rookie Josh Jones, surprisingly still available in the third round.

Arizona added three potential defensive starters in free agents LBs Devon Kennard and De'Vondre Campbell and DL Jordan Phillips. The biggest boost could come from Simmons, the Clemson standout who has shown the ability to shine in coverage, as a blitzer and against the run.

Saints, Winston agree on one-year deal

In New Orleans, the Saints have agreed to terms on a one-year contract with unrestricted free agent quarterback Jameis Winston.

Winston, the first overall pick in the 2015 draft, will serve as the backup to Drew Brees.

Winston is coming off a season in which he led the NFL with 5,109 yards passing and ranked second with 33 touchdown passes, but he also led the NFL in interceptions with 30. That made Winston the first QB in NFL history to have at least 30 TDs and 30 interceptions. Tampa Bay allowed Winston to enter free agency and replaced him with former Patriots QB Tom Brady.

Winston was a two-year starter at Florida State, where he won the Heisman Trophy and led the Seminoles to a national title as a freshman in the 2013 season.

In five seasons with the Buccaneers, he has passed for 19,737 yards and 121 touchdowns while throwing 88 interceptions. But while he was productive statistically, that didn't amount to winning. The Bucs went 28-42 in games Winston started.

Winston also became known for making news off the field. He was suspended for the first three games in 2018 after the NFL investigated allegations by a female ride-share service driver that the quarterback made unwanted sexual advances.

The driver never reported the matter to authorities but did notify her employer, Uber.

During college, Winston was accused of raping a fellow student at FSU but was never charged. The university in January 2016 settled a Title IX lawsuit with Winston's accuser for \$1.7 million over its handling of the allegations.

Winston also was implicated in a shoplifting case involving about \$33 in crab legs and crawfish.

the Super Bowl last year and we want to have an opportunity to win it again," Shanahan said. "So, every decision we made was also with how do we help this organization for the future? But it still feels like we're in a position to be the same team, if not better this year than we were last year. ... It was a challenge, but when it's all said and done, it was fun and I like the decisions we've made."

Seattle's priority in free agency and the draft largely centered on the offensive line. At one point, after draft-

ing Damien Lewis in the third-round, Seattle had 19 O-linemen on its roster. Then veterans D.J. Fluker and Justin Britt were released, clearing \$12 million in salary cap space. But the overhaul will mean Seattle has three or four new starters on its line.

The Seahawks also landed a presumptive new starter in the secondary, trading for Quinton Dunbar with Washington, and believe they could have a starting linebacker in first-round pick Jordyn Brooks. They could still use another

edge rusher even after signing veterans Benson Mayowa and Bruce Irvin, and drafting Darrell Taylor and Alton Robinson. They could bring back Jadeveon Clowney or sign Everson Griffen.

The Rams' push for a title came with a price. They have significant dead money cap tied up in Cooks, traded to Houston, and Gurley, cut and now in Atlanta. Throw in the first-round pick they gave up last season to acquire cornerback Jalen Ramsey and the Rams had little ability to make

significant improvements on a roster that went from the Super Bowl in the 2018 season to out of the playoffs last season.

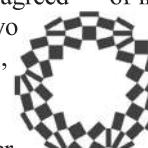
Few teams have had as successful an offseason on paper as the Cardinals, 5-10-1 in the debut season for coach Kliff Kingsbury and Murray. Arizona added a dynamic receiver in Hopkins, which should help unleash the passing game. Running back Kenyan Drake stayed and will team with intriguing seventh-rounder Eno Benjamin. Offensive Rookie of the Year Murray should have

you hold the Olympic Games in a totally different structure such as no audience, or a very limited participation," said Kentaro Iwata, professor of infectious disease at Kobe University.

Devi Sridhar, a professor of Global Health at the University of Edinburgh, also said holding the Olympics may depend on finding a vaccine. This could also apply to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics in China, where the coronavirus was first detected.

She said a vaccine was "optimistically 12 to 18 months away."

"Science is just half the battle," Sridhar said in



Tokyo Olympics difficult without vaccine

TOKYO (AP)—The medical community in Japan is moving toward a consensus that holding next year's Tokyo Olympics may hinge on finding a coronavirus vaccine.

Japan Medical Association president Yoshitake Yokokura said in a video media conference on Tuesday that the Olympics were possible only if the infections were under control, not only in Japan, but globally.

"In my view, it would be difficult to hold the Olympics unless effective vaccines are developed," Yokokura said.

He did not say whether he opposes the Olympics without vaccines.

Japan has reported 13,576 COVID-19 cases, and 712 others from a cruise ship

quarantined near Tokyo earlier this year. On Tuesday, the health ministry reported 389 total deaths from the virus.

Japan and the International Olympic Committee agreed to postpone the Tokyo Games until July 23, 2021, because of the coronavirus pandemic. Japan is under a month-long state of emergency amid a rapid increase of infections across the country.

A Japanese professor of infectious disease said last week he was also skeptical the Olympics could open in 15 months.

"I am very pessimistic about holding the Olympics Games next summer unless

an email to The Associated Press. "The other half is manufacturing enough doses and getting these into people across the world. How would prioritization be done?"

She asked who would get the vaccine first, health workers, those working with the vulnerable or the elderly, or the elderly themselves. Sridhar said it was unclear how young, strong, Olympic athletes would "fit" into the "priority process."

"I'm sure there is going to be some innovative thinking about how to combine safety of athletes, their coaches and teams, with the awareness that sports play a crucial role for the world—for economic reasons, but also socially," she said.

MLB options include 3 regional divisions



Major League Baseball is exploring various options that could allow the season to start if the medical situation allows, including a plan in which the 30 teams might be split into three regional divisions.

Among the formats under consideration is one in which teams could be restricted to playing within their region, two people familiar with the discussions said Tuesday. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no public statements were authorized.

That plan, if used, would break up the traditional alignments of the American and National Leagues. It also would cut travel during the coronavirus pandemic.

MLB also has looked at configurations for all-Arizona, Arizona-and-Florida and Arizona-plus-Texas-plus-Florida locations, the people said. The latest plan was first reported by USA Today.

Another variation would have teams start in Arizona, Texas and Florida, playing in empty ballparks, and then if the health situation allows, switch later to their regular-season sites. If conditions improve later in the year, they possibly could start playing before fans with only a percentage of seats sold.

Opening day had been scheduled for March 26, but the new coronavirus caused MLB to delay the start to mid-May at the earliest.

Any plan would be subject to medical approval plus consent of federal, state and local authorities. Any schedule



with games at neutral sites or without fans would require an agreement between MLB and the players' association.

Baseball officials have told the union of their thinking but have not made any formal proposals.

Baseball also is considering expanding the playoffs beyond the current 10-team format. Officials have discussed extending the playoffs into November or possibly even December, using domed ballparks and warm-weather cities.

Any plan would be contingent on baseball gaining access to test about 3,000 people on a regular basis: about 1,200 players plus staff and broadcast personnel. Players most likely would need three to four weeks of workouts before opening day.

Baseball officials have been encouraged by statements

about the prospect of starting the season from President Donald Trump, Govs. Greg Abbott (Texas), Andrew Cuomo (New York) and Tom Wolf (Pennsylvania) and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, one of the people said.

In a sign of baseball's significance, Cuomo appointed Yankees president Randy Levine and Mets chief operating officer Jeff Wilpon to his New York Forward re-opening advisory board on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Pirates are suspending retirement benefits for members of Pittsburgh's baseball operations staff in an effort to cope with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

General manager Ben Cherington said Tuesday the team has been searching for ways to find savings with the 2020 season on hold. The temporary suspension of retirement

benefits is part of an effort to avoid any potential personnel cutbacks.

"We did identify the retirement contributions at least temporarily an area where we might find some savings without too much impact on people, in terms of their every day lives," Cherington said. "Our full expectation is that the contribution will go back into effect as soon as possible."

The club announced last week it planned to pay all employees through May. While Cherington is optimistic there will be some semblance of a season, he said the franchise is exploring all options from top to bottom in an effort to mitigate any negative impact on employees.

"I've been really inspired not just by the level of kind of thought of collaboration on how to do this in the most

thoughtful human way but also the response from our staff on both the business and baseball side has been overwhelmingly aware and willing to participate in some level of sacrifice to preserve our long-term goals," Cherington said.

NMIFA

From Page 20

community, especially at these trying times. This is our way of giving back to our community that has been very supportive of our program since the very beginning," Tolentino said.

"We have players who also work as front-liners and we thank them for their service. They are brave individuals on and off the pitch and we wish that they will continue to have the strength and wisdom to help us conquer this crisis," Tolentino added. (PR)

AP
Toronto Blue Jays catcher Reese McGuire waits on the throw as Pittsburgh Pirates' Bryan Reynolds begins his slide during a spring training baseball game, Thursday, March 12, 2020, in Bradenton, Fla.

In other news, MLB teams on Tuesday they could decide their own ticket refund policies.

A revised schedule has not been announced, and teams had treated the missed games as postponements and not announced refund policies.

Two fans sued MLB, the 30 teams and ticket companies last week in federal court in Los Angeles, seeking refunds. The suit asks for class-action status.

In Baltimore, Orioles outfielder Trey Mancini is undergoing chemotherapy for stage 3 colon cancer and expects to miss the season if major leaguers return this summer.

Mancini had a malignant tumor removed shortly before turning 28 on March 18. He has been undergoing chemotherapy since April 13.

Meanwhile, Torres thanked NMIFA for joining the growing list of groups that are helping the CNMI government in its campaign against COVID-19.

"NMIFA is not only teaching our kids how to play soccer and practice sportsmanship, but also showing us how to look after the health and safety of our community. To NMIFA and all organizations and companies stepping up, we truly appreciate your help as we fight this pandemic as one strong community," Torres said. (PR)

SCHOOLS

From Page 20

season is canceled and we can't make any plans as we have to wait for the development in this pandemic," the NMA head added.

Had it not been for the COVID-19 crisis, the All Schools track meet should have been getting ready for the tournament proper. In the past, NMA used to hold qualifying events in March and April and schedule the championships in May.

Qualifiers are divided into elementary division (U7, U9, and U11 age group), middle school (U14), and high school (U18). The elementary group competes in the 60m, 100, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1,500m, and 4x100m relays runs, long jump, and softball throw, while middle and high school participants do the same run races plus 3,000m, 4x100m and 4x400m relays, long



In this file photo, Public School System Student Support Services Athletic Program director Nick Gross joins elementary school students for a group photo at the conclusion of the 2019 Public School System/McDonald's All Schools Track and Field Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex.

jump, and discuss, javelin, and shot put throws.

Saipan student-athletes vie for slots in the May tournament,

while Rota and Tinian are given outright berths in the finale.

The All Schools meet is NMA's grassroots program and

has produced talented athletes who represented the CNMI in international tournaments, such as the World Championships

and the Oceania Area Championships. The event has also served as a training ground for young athletes wanting to don

the Commonwealth colors in regional competitions like the Micronesian Games and Micronesian Championships.



NBA 'more willing than ever' to delay season

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

Rams chasing 49ers, Seahawks, and Cards

PAGE 18



20 THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

NMIFA donates 5,000 facemasks to front-liners

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association continues to work with the community in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

After launching a video that promotes Asian Football Confederation's #BreakTheChain campaign against the spread of the virus early this month, NMIFA this time donated 5,000 facemasks to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for the front-liners. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres received the donation from NMIFA president Jerry Tan and general secretary Ross Zapanta yesterday at the JP Center in Garapan.

"NMIFA credits the timely action of our governor, the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force, and most especially, our front-liners for being able to

control the spread of the coronavirus in the CNMI," Zapanta said. "Thank you to the

CNMI front-liners for sacrificing their time and family life, and for bravely facing the risks during the time that the community is very vulnerable to the pandemic."

"Evidently, there is no longer any active case right now and 12 of the 14 recorded cases have recovered under the proper care of the doctors and nurses of the CHCC. Nevertheless, NMIFA hopes that everyone in the CNMI will continue to be vigilant and we hope that the donated 5,000 facemasks will help reduce the risk to our front-liners as they continue to provide valuable service to all of us," the NMIFA general secretary added.

Joining Tan and Zapanta at the donation turnover ceremony were treasurer Elna Curate, executive director Ruselle Zapanta, NMIFA Executive Committee member Wesley Bogdan, and NMIFA Social Responsibility Committee head Merlie Tolentino.

Tolentino, who represents the NMIFA in the AFC Social Responsibility Committee, said these challenging times give the FA the opportunity to work on initiatives that do not revolve around football.

"Besides promoting the sport in the CNMI, NMIFA, as an organization, also has a responsibility to help our

See NMIFA on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, front row second left, receives the facemasks donated by Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, led by its president Jerry Tan, front row center, to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for the front-liners. Also attending the donation turnover ceremony yesterday at the JP Center in Garapan were NMIFA officials and Federal Emergency Management Agency staff.

All Schools in Fall season possible



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roeslyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the Public School System/McDonald's All Schools Track and Field Championships still suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, moving the annual competition to the Fall season has become an option.

High school students race in the boys U18's 100m run during the 2019 Public School System/McDonald's All Schools Track and Field Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex.

"That's a possibility, but events may be limited and we have to concur the decision with our partners—the Public School System, the private schools, and McDonald's," said Ramon Tebuteb, president of Northern Marianas

Athletics—the lead organizer of the All Schools.

Tebuteb added there are also other factors to consider like the age group requirement and the season itself because NMA usually reserves the months of October and November for



JON PEREZ

A Brilliant Star School student, right, hands over the baton to her teammate during the 4x100m relay run in the 2019 Public School System/McDonald's All Schools Track and Field Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex.

cross-country races. As for the age group concerns, new rules may have to be changed since cut-off dates would be the first quarter of the school year instead of last.

"These are the challenges we will be facing if we will consider having the track season in the Fall season. Again, we have to sit down with our

partners before any decision is made. Right now, we have to follow the government's directive to refrain from holding any event that gathers a crowd. Our priority is our student-athletes and coaches and the community's safety," Tebuteb said.

"We can't say that the track See SCHOOLS on Page 19

